ZIFF-DAVIS a SOFTBANK company

ALL THE REVIEWS • ALL THE DEMOS

PC GAMING WORLD

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON
TRANSPORT TYCOON GOES THEME PARK!

http://www.pcgw.co.uk

COMMAND & CONQUER
TIBERIAN SUN

LOADS OF HOT NEW INFO!

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3 REVEALED!

Issue 26 February 1999 £4.99

OVER 30 REVIEWS

- Star Wars: Rogue Squadron
- Blood II: The Chosen
- Close Combat 3
- Falcon 4.0
- WWII Fighters
- Moto Racer 2
- Delta Force
- Shogo: Mobile Armor Division

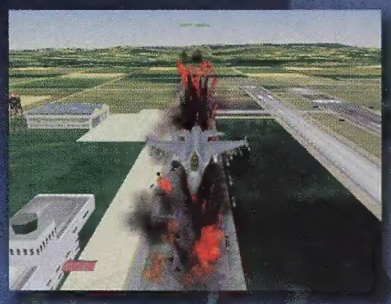
GIANT PREVIEW ISSUE!!

ALIENS VS PREDATOR • TOCA TOURING CAR 2 • SILVER • DRIVER • DESCENT 3
EVERQUEST • CRICKET WORLD CUP 99 • RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 99 • FLY!
LANDS OF LORE III • SOULBRINGER • PANZER ELITE • INTERSTATE 82

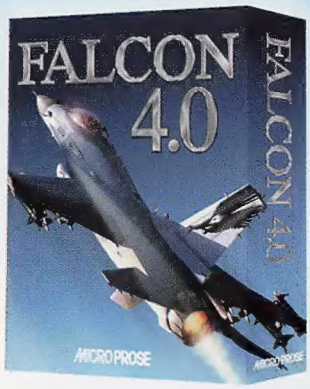
FALCON™
"It's a complex, involving, gob-smacking, earth-shattering simulation of real warfare...without doubt, one of the most astounding games we have ever seen"
PC FORMAT

4.0

THE WORLD'S FINEST FLIGHT SIMULATION.



This is the new benchmark in flight simulation technology. Pilot tested for accuracy, ***Falcon 4.0*** models the Block 50/52 F-16C; the most versatile and unrivalled production fighter in existence. Master the F-16C using numerous training missions that range from the 'basics of flight' to 'advanced dogfighting' and combat over the Korean Peninsula in real-time dynamic campaigns.



HASBRO Interactive

© 1998 Hasbro Interactive and MicroProse, Inc. All Rights Reserved. MICROPROSE, FALCON, HASBRO INTERACTIVE, the HASBRO INTERACTIVE logo and FALCON 4.0 are trademarks of Hasbro or its affiliates. MicroProse is a subsidiary of Hasbro. All other trademarks are the property of their respective holders.

CD-ROM

MICROPROSE

www.microprose.com

We were always on the defensive due to the Bf 109E's greater ceiling, and our staple tactic was to turn straight into them so that they couldn't latch onto your tail. You then pulled on the 'g' in the hope that your own superior rate of turn would allow you to whip around on to their tails. Often, having performed this manoeuvre on two or three consecutive occasions, you would right yourself only to find the sky empty of friend or foe! Then the search began all over again.'

Flt Sgt George Unwin, No 19 Sqn, Fowlmere, 1940

Stunning dogfight action in fighter pilot approved flight models

Flight experience enhanced by spectacular lighting and weather effects

Fly for British, German or American forces through 45 historically accurate missions

NATIONS

FIGHTER COMMAND

THE AUTHENTIC WWII FIGHTER EXPERIENCE

PSYGNOSIS

PC CD ROM

Nations: Fighter Command, Psygnosis and the Psygnosis logo are ™ or ® and © 1990-9 of Psygnosis Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Photo: John M. Dibbs.

CONTENTS

PC GAMING WORLD

Top and circle top: C&C: Tiberian Sun
Middle left: Delta Force
Middle right: Close Combat 3
Below circle: Falcon 4.0
Bottom: RollerCoaster Tycoon
Right: Aliens Vs Predator

GET ONLINE WITH PC GAMING WORLD

Here's an idea – come visit our Web site, why don't you:

- Daily gaming news
- Official charts – updated weekly
- The latest downloads, plus thousands of classic demos
- Latest games release schedule – updated fortnightly
- Plus – reviews, previews and online chat

www.pcgw.co.uk

FEATURES...

44 RETRO GAMING
The complete lowdown on the emulation scene: the hows, why's and legal wherefores of playing classic games of yesteryear on your PC

50 ROLLER COASTER
Our resident coaster junkie interviews Chris Sawyer, creator of Transport Tycoon, and previews his forthcoming venture into Theme Park territory – RollerCoaster Tycoon

54 GAMES DESIGN
Getting under the skin of games design, we talk to leading development lights about the real criterion for developing different games genres – what comes first, what really matters and what gets dropped

62 COMMAND & CONQUER: TIBERIAN SUN
The Big One returns with flash new graphics, devastating new weapons and vastly larger maps. Only a couple of months to wait now...

REVIEWS

71 SIMULATIONS
Falcon 4.0 has landed. No way! Yes way. The most complete jet combat simulation ever conceived is finished at last (give or take some 37 patches). Plus Jane's World War II Fighters, Ultra Fighters and more. Including Top Gun Hornet's Nest, unfortunately

78 ACTION
Great floating air biscuits, Batman, Abe's back! The flatulent hero returns in the perfectly formed Abe's Exoddus. Elsewhere, things turn nasty with Blood II, Natural Fawn Killers, Limb By Limb and Shogo. And the less said about Barbie Riding Club the better. Shocking stuff

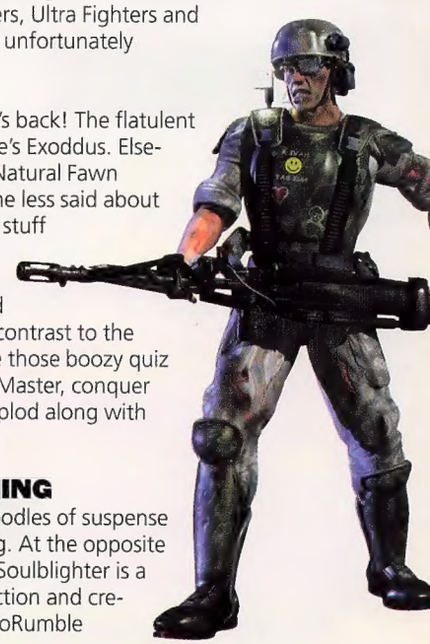
90 CLASSICS & PUZZLES
Stratego marks a welcome and polished return for an old faithful – in complete contrast to the revamped Asteroids. Alternatively, relive those boozy quiz nights with the All In One Carling Quiz Master, conquer the world with Pinky And The Brain, or plod along with Scotland Yard

96 STRATEGY & WARGAMING
Close Combat III delivers classy AI and oodles of suspense – a new high for squad-level wargaming. At the opposite end of the real-time spectrum, Myth II: Soulblighter is a tactical blood-fest with its own construction and creation tools. Plus Western Front and RoboRumble

103 SPORTS
NBA Live 99 becomes the definitive basketball game on the PC, offering new levels of realism and genuine personality. We also have The Golf Pro 2 and Ultimate Soccer Manager '98/99 season add-ons, but Ski Racing Extreme's major contribution to the proceedings is giving Picabo Street the world's squarest rear-view

108 ADVENTURE & ROLEPLAYING
Dark Side of the Moon is the star – in fact, sole – attraction in the adventure and roleplaying genre this month. And it has nothing whatsoever to do with Pink Floyd

120 ONLINE
An in-depth preview of the hottest massively, multiplayer roleplaying game for the coming year – 989 Studio's EverQuest. Plus the best mods, maps and utilities as chosen by Id's staff for Extremities for Quake II, and news of Wireplay's free Mindgames initiative



UK VAT AND DELIVERY INCLUDED!

THIS IS JUST PART OF OUR HUGE RANGE. SEE THE CLUB MAGAZINE, OR VISIT OUR SHOPS OR OUR INTERNET SITE, TO SEE JUST HOW MUCH WE HAVE TO OFFER

CD ROM SOFTWARE

This is just a small selection from our range of 1500 titles

ACTUA SOCCER 3 ... 25.99
ACTUA TENNIS ... 24.99
AGE OF EMPIRE 94% ... 23.99
AGE OF EMPIRE: RISE OF ROME ... 19.99
ALPHA CENTAURI ... 33.99

TRY THESE FOR FUN

DANCE EJAY ... 22.99
DOGZ 3 ... 17.99
RUGRATS: PRINT SHOP ... 19.99

ANNO 1602 ... 28.99
APACHE HAVOC 93% ... 26.99
BATTLETECH: MECH COMMANDER ... 24.99
BLADE RUNNER 94% ... 19.99
BRITISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF ... 22.99
BROKEN SWORD 2 92% ... 27.99
CAESAR 3 91% ... 24.99
CARMAGEDDON 2 92% ... 29.99
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2 1997/98 ... 17.99
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3 ... 25.99
CIVILISATION 2 ULTIMATE COLL. ... 23.99
CIVILIZATION 2: THE TEST OF TIME ... 28.99
CLOSE COMBAT - A BRIDGE TO FAR ... 29.99
COLIN McRAE RALLY 93% ... 21.99
C & C: TIBERIAN SUN ... 32.99
COMMAND THE COURSE ... 15.99
COMMANDO'S: BEHIND ENEMY LINES ... 28.99
DELTA FORCE ... 30.99
DIABLO 93% ... 19.99
DOMINION STORM 92% ... 24.99
DUNE 2000 ... 28.99
EUROPEAN AIR WAR 87% ... 28.99
F16/MIG 29 ... 29.99
F22 - ADF 93% ... 24.99
FA 18 KOREA 1 90% ... 21.99
FA PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL MGR ... 29.99
FALCON V4.0 ... 30.99
FALLOUT 2 86% ... 29.99
FIFA SOCCER 99 92% ... 26.99
FINAL FANTASY 7 93% ... 29.99
FLIGHT SIM 98 + WORLD OF FLIGHT ... 37.99
FORMULA 1 95 90% ... 19.99
FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2 95% ... 10.99
FORSAKEN 95% ... 12.99
FUTURE COP LAPD 2100 ... 17.99
GADGET ... 14.99
GANGSTERS: ORGANISED CRIME ... 28.99
GEX 3D: ENTER THE GECKO 82% ... 12.99
GRAND PRIX LEGENDS 93% ... 28.99

CLIP ART UTILITIES

BRODERBUND 125,000 CLICK ART ... 35.99
COREL DRAW 8.0 ... 169.99
COREL GALLERY MAGIC "65,000" ... 19.99

GRAND THEFT AUTO (18) 92% ... 15.99
GRAND TOURING ... 25.99
GRIM FANDANGO 95% ... 29.99
HALF - LIFE 95% ... 28.99
HERETIC 2 90% ... 29.99
INTERNATIONAL CRICKET CAPTAIN ... 20.99
JOHNNY HERBERT'S GRAND PRIX ... 19.99
KNIGHTS & MERCHANTS 85% ... 28.99
LINKS 99 ... 28.99
LORDS OF THE REALM 2 81% ... 9.99
LULA - THE SEXY EMPIRE 89% ... 14.99
MAGIC & MAYHEM 90% ... 28.99
MICHAEL OWEN'S WORLD SOCCER 99 ... 25.99
MORTAL KOMBAT 4 ... 16.99
MOTO RACER 2 ... 30.99
MOTOCROSS MADNESS ... 29.99
MS COMBAT FLIGHT SIMULATOR ... 29.99
NEED FOR SPEED 3: HOT PURSUIT ... 29.99
NHL 99 ... 29.99
ODDWORLDS 2: ABE'S EXODUS ... 24.99
POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING 93% ... 29.99
PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING 94% ... 9.99
QUAKE 2 97% ... 17.99
QUAKE 2 DATA CD - JUGGERNAUT ... 12.99
QUAKE 2 DATA CD - THE Q2 FILES ... 10.99
QUAKE RESURRECTION PACK ... 14.99
RAILROAD TYCOON 2 90% ... 28.99
RAINBOW SIX (TOM CLANCY) 85% ... 25.99
RIVERWORLD ... 24.99
RUGRATS: ADVENTURE GAME ... 21.99
SABRINA THE TEENAGE WITCH ... 17.99
SCREAMER INJECTION ... 16.99
SENTINEL RETURNS 90% ... 19.99
SETTLERS 3 ... 25.99
SHADOW COMPANY ... 29.99
SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE 88% ... 24.99
SHOGO 92% ... 31.99
SIERRA PRO PILOT DOUBLE PACK ... 19.99
SIM CITY 3000 ... 32.99
SIM GOLF ... 9.99
SIN ... 29.99
SPECIAL OPS: RANGER ASSAULT ... 29.99
STAR TREK: BIRTH OF FEDERATION ... 28.99
STAR TREK: KLINGON HONOUR ... 30.99
STAR WARS: BEHIND THE SCENES ... 15.99

MICROSOFT UTILITIES

MICROSOFT ENCARTA 99 ... 39.99
MICROSOFT PLUS! 98 ... 38.99
MS WINDOWS 98 UPGRADE ... 78.99

STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON ... 28.99
STAR WARS: X-WING COLLECTORS ... 28.99
STAR WARS: X-WING VS TIE FIGHTER ... 19.99
SYNDICATE WARS 95% ... 7.99
THE CHOSEN (BLOOD 2) ... 28.99
THE GOLF PRO 2 - WENTWORTH ... 16.99
THEME HOSPITAL & SIM CITY 2000 ... 24.99
THIEF: DARK PROJECT ... 28.99
TIGER WOODS 99 PGA TOUR 80% ... 29.99
TOCA TOURING CARS 86% ... 22.99
TOCA TOURING CARS 2 ... 23.99
TOMB RAIDER 95% ... 13.99
TOMB RAIDER 2 94% ... 21.99
TOMB RAIDER 3 ... 28.99
TOP GUN 2: HORNETS NEST ... 25.99
TOTAL ANNIHILATION 94% ... 13.99
TRESPASSER ... 29.99
ULTIMA ASCENSION ... 33.99
ULTIMATE SOCCER MANAGER 98 ... 24.99
ULTIMATE WIZARDARY ARCHIVE ... 19.99
ULTRA FIGHTERS ... 23.99
UNREAL 95% ... 24.99
URBAN ASSAULT ... 24.99
WAR OF THE WORLDS ... 28.99
WARBREEDS 87% ... 14.99
WARGASM 93% ... 28.99
WARLORDS 3: DARKLORDS RISING ... 19.99
WARZONE: 2100 ... 28.99
WESTERN FRONT ... 25.99
WING COMMANDER PROPHECY GOLD ... 29.99
WORLD CUP 98 91% ... 12.99
WORLD WAR 2 - FIGHTERS ... 30.99
WORMS ARMAGEDDON ... 24.99
X-FILES: THE GAME 88% ... 26.99

BOOKS

AGE OF EMPIRES: INSIDE MOVES ... 15.49
C & C: RED ALERT OFFICIAL GUIDE ... 17.99
FINAL FANTASY 7 OFFICIAL GUIDE ... 13.49
IDIOTS GUIDE TO WINDOWS 98 ... 13.99
SR BOOK OF 3001 CHEATS ... 3.99
TOMB RAIDER 2 OFFICIAL GUIDE ... 9.99
TOMB RAIDER 3 OFFICIAL GUIDE ... 9.99
WINDOWS 98 STEP BY STEP ... 22.99

PC CONTROLLERS

GRAVIS GAMEPAD PRO ... 19.99
10 programmable buttons with built-in two player connector

MS SIDEWINDER GAME PAD ...27.99
8 programmable buttons, 8 way hat switch, trigger button, throttle wheel

GRAVIS XTERMINATOR PROGRAMMABLE GAMEPAD ...29.99
6 fully programmable buttons, 8 way digital directional pad, 2 digital triggers for instance response and built in 2 player connector

SAITEK R4 RACING WHEEL & PEDALS 69.99
User adjustable self centering torque for realistic road feel, ratio digital technology for faster and more acurate driving plus selectable wheel height, selectable gear or shift stick pedals. Complete with footpedals

ALFA QUAD 2 PLAYER JOYSTICK ADAPTOR 16.99

PC CONSUMABLES

	INC VAT
10 FORMATTED 2HD 3.5" DISKS	4.99
10 UNBRANDED CD-RECORDABLE	11.99
10 VERBATIM CD-RECORDABLE	13.99
50 UNBRANDED CD-RECORDABLE	47.99
100 MB IOMEGA ZIP DRIVE CART	10.99

GENUINE MANUFACTURER INK CARTS

BLACK - EPSON 700/500/400	18.99
COLOUR - EPSON 6000/800/600/400	18.99
BLACK - HP DESKJET 560C/540	21.99
COLOUR - HP DESKJET 560C/550C/540	22.99
BLACK - HP DESKJET 690C/600	21.99
COLOUR - HP DESKJET 690C/670C/600	22.99
BLACK - CANON BJC 240/210/200/100	15.99
COLOUR - CANON BJC 240/210	17.99
BLACK - CANON BJC 4650/4300/4200	8.99
COLOUR - CANON BJC 4650/4550/4300/4200	14.99

RAM

	INC VAT
2 x 8 MB 72 Pin EDO SIMM	23.99
2 x 16 MB 72 Pin EDO SIMM	56.99
2 x 32 MB 72 Pin EDO SIMM	96.99
16 MB 66 Mhz 168 Pin DIMM SDRAM	22.99
32 MB 66 Mhz 168 Pin DIMM SDRAM	39.99
64 MB 66 Mhz 168 Pin DIMM SDRAM	69.99
64 MB 100 Mhz 168 Pin DIMM SDRAM	79.99
128 MB 100 Mhz 168 Pin DIMM SDRAM	149.99

100 Mhz DIMMs will only work with P350 or higher

DOWN BY UP TO 50%

PRINTERS
SCANNERS
SOUND CARDS
TV/VIDEO CARDS
GRAPHICS CARDS
INTEL CPU'S
MOTHERBOARDS
CD ROM & DVD
CD RE-WRITERS
HARD DRIVES
ZIP DRIVES
USB & LEADS
NETWORKING
SOFTWARE
DVD FILMS
BOOKS
CONSUMABLES
CONTROLLERS

Special Reserve
Live @ http://special.reserve.co.uk

01279 321 321
OR FAX 01279 322 322

OR ORDER ON-LINE AT UKGAMES.COM

free gifts
huge prizes
3000 cheats
1000 reviews
release dates
downloads
midi files
on-line games
video clips
double reddies

£6.99 gets you into the Club

10 Magazines, Competitions, 3000 Cheats, Big Discounts, Huge Range and a FREE GIFT*

OR TRIAL MEMBERSHIP ONLY 60p

Established 11 years, Special Reserve is the market leader in mail-order home computing and video games. We only sell genuine UK products, we deliver quickly from vast stocks and we offer the lowest prices all year around. That's why over 400,000 people have joined Special Reserve, the biggest games club in the World.

We only supply members but you can be any age and trial membership is just 60p. Annual membership is amazing value at £6.99 (UK) including 10 magazines and our Book of 3000 Cheats. Buy any one item at the same time as you join and we'll give you a choice of great FREE GIFTS worth up to £40. The 17 FREE GIFTS on offer include a Joypad, Mouse, Casio Organiser, Yo-yo Goody Bag and 20 Classic Games as one great gift. Telephone 01279 321 321 now to hear the current list of gifts and the latest release dates for games.

Order on-line at ukgames.com for double Reddies. Just three on-line purchases will earn you one of our membership gifts as a loyalty bonus. Four purchases will earn you a SUPERGIFT.

Immediate cheque clearance
Special Reserve,
PO Box 847, Harlow,
CM21 9PH

£2 LESS

Deduct £2 extra discount off the price of any game if you buy another game or any accessory or peripheral at the same time. Claim your extra discount when you order by post, FAX or phone 01279 321 321, quoting PC GAMING WORLD

STUNNING RAM PRICES
PRICES INCLUDE VAT & CARRIAGE!
HOW LOW!

16 MB CREATIVE 3D2 BANSHEE VOODOO II GRAPHICS £96.99

DIAMOND INTERNAL 56K SUPRAEXPRESS FAX/MODEM £49.99

HUGE RANGE OF CONSOLE GAMES FROM £9.99

There has never been a range like MAXX 4D

3D2+DVD+4D=4D

STAGGERING SPECS!

		Ex VAT
MAXX 300	799.99	680.84
8 GB U-DMA Hard Drive, 64 MB DIMM		
MAXX 350	999.99	851.06
8 GB U-DMA Hard Drive, 64 MB DIMM		
MAXX 4D 333	999.99	851.06
8 GB U-DMA Hard Drive, 64 MB DIMM		
MAXX 4D 350	1199.99	1021.27
8 GB U-DMA Hard Drive, 128 MB DIMM		
MAXX 4D 400	1399.99	1191.48
12 GB U-DMA Hard Drive, 128 MB DIMM		
MAXX 4D 450	1549.99	1319.14
12 GB U-DMA Hard Drive, 128 MB DIMM		

MAXX4D - GAMING'S FOURTH DIMENSION

- Genuine Intel CPU & Chip Set
- 8 GB or 12 GB U-DMA Drive
- 64 MB or 128 MB DIMM RAM
- 16 MB Voodoo II Banshee 3D2 Graphics Acceleration
- 5 x DVD & 32 x Speed CD with Soft DVD to run films
- Creative SB 128 4D Directional Sound
- Cambridge Audio 200 Watt Hi-Fi Quadrophonic Subwoofer
- 15" Adi Monitor with 3-Year Warranty
- Microsoft Windows 98 plus Works 4.5 CD
- Unreal & Incoming 4D Games
- 20 Playable Top-Game Demo's

APR 0% DEPOSIT ONLY 10% MAXX FROM £799

ADD £25 FOR ON-SITE WARRANTY

Shown with 17" Adi Monitor option (add £100). Options available such as TV or Software bundles.

0% Pay in 9 Months! on any purchase totalling over £200

10% deposit, no more to pay for 9 months and no interest, subject to status. You can buy anything from our catalogue or shops this way. 0% APR if paid in full after 9 months or 29.8% APR extended loan. See Club Mag for details.

DEPOSIT ONLY 10%

Please telephone 01279 321 321 and ask us to send you full details of the MAXX range. Also at http://special.reserve.co.uk & at the Club Shops.

SPECIAL RESERVE DISCOUNT SHOPS

All our shops have PC Upgrade & Repair Facilities.
£12 to Fit or £30 to Fix or Configure.
Prices listed here are for mail order but you can buy in store for just a few quid more. We'll beat any locally advertised price by a full £2.

IT'S EASY TO PARK

209/213 St Mary's Lane, UPMINSTER, ESSEX.
2 miles from junction 29 of the M25. Opposite Somerfield Supermarket. **01708 225544**

43 Broomfield Road, CHELMSFORD, ESSEX.
Just around the corner from the bus station. **01245 348777**

164 Derby Road, STAPLEFORD, NOTTINGHAM.
2 miles from junction 25 of the M1, near Kwik Fit and Pizza Hut. **0115 949 1000**

351 Gloucester Road (A38), BRISTOL.
1 ½ miles from the City Centre and just up from Kwik Save. **0117 924 5000**

168 High Street, EGHAM, SURREY.
Near Windsor and Staines. Just 1 mile off junction 13 on the M25. **01784 473444**

The Maltings, Station Road, SAWBRIDGEWORTH, HERTS.
Not far from the M11, over the road from the train station. **01279 322 399**

Inevitably some products listed may not yet be available and prices may change - please phone. SAVE = Saving off full recommended price. Sent to press 07/01/99 Errors & Ommisions Excluded. Inter-Mediates Ltd, T/A Special Reserve, The Maltings, Sawbridgeworth, Herts CM21 9PG.

CONTENTS

PC GAMING WORLD

AND MORE...

18 INCOMING
Scoop previews on a host of stunning games for the new year. Including TOCA 2 Touring Cars, Rally Championship 99 and Interstate 82, Lands of Lore III and Soulbringer, Aliens Vs Predator and Descent 3, Cricket World Cup 99 and Championship Manager 3. Driver, Silver, Fly!, Panzer Elite and more...

60 TECHNOLOGY
Don't throw it in the bin just yet – Loyd Case tells you how to eke the very last drop of games performance out of that Pentium 166 and answers questions about PCI modems and online gamesplaying

67 GAMER'S EDGE
How to tackle the toughest missions in Carmageddon II, and how to get to Rubacava in LucasArt's stunning adventure Grim Fandango

114 TOP GEAR
Saitek's Cyborg 3D sets new standards in customisable digital flight sticks, while Creative Labs offers off-the-peg AC3 and the Quantum 3D X-24 is the ultimate 3D accelerator for the ultimate wallet

Left top circle: Soulbringer
Top: Driver
Middle left: Aliens Vs Predator
Circle: Championship Manager 3
Right: Quake III: Arena
Bottom: Rally Championship 99
Below: Top Gear

REGULARS...

8 COMMUNICATIONS
11 EDITORIAL
14 EYE CANDY
19 FACTS
20 PIPELINE
24 GAMES TIMELINE
31 TOP TEN NOW PLAYING
36 8 HOURS BEHIND
40 CHARTS
61 NEXT MONTH
70 ABOUT THE REVIEWS
110 RERELEASES
111 REVIEWS INDEX
111 ADVERTISING INDEX
112 RECENTLY RECOMMENDED
115 KILLER RIGS
116 MULTIMEDIA
117 BOOKS
125 PCGW HALL OF FAME
126 ON THE CDS

HOW TO CONTACT PC GAMING WORLD
Telephone: 0171 903 6800 Fax: 0171 903 6005 email: pcgw_mail@zd.com
Web: http://www.pcgw.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BACK ISSUES:
PC Gaming World, Ziff-Davis UK, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 9EF. Credit Card Orders: 01858 438803 (8am-9pm Mon-Fri; 8am-4pm Sat; 10am-4pm Sun); Fax: 01858 434958; email: ziffdavis@subscription.co.uk
Subscriptions: UK one year (twelve issues): £29.97; UK two year £54.97; Overseas subscribers (including Eire) please add £12.00 per year extra for postage Back issues: £5.00 each including post and packing

While we take considerable effort to ensure the information published in PC Gaming World is accurate to the best of our available knowledge at the time of press, we cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage resulting either directly or indirectly from any published material

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE
25TH FEBRUARY

COMMUNICATIONS

I read the January issue on the bus ride to my local high street to buy a brand spanking new PC and Loyd Case's article was a real eye opener – explaining that Katmai, Rambus DRAM, Socket A, 'Soft Audio', 'Firewire' and 'device bay' are all on their way. Does Intel think that constantly introducing new technologies like 'Socket A' encourages more people into our wonderful world of PC gaming?

Jason Fitzgerald, Southwater, West Sussex

Not all of the technologies you mention can be laid at Intel's door. Anyway, its business is making money from home and business computing. Its understanding of gamer's needs can be deduced from the performance of the i740 chip...

For the life of me I cannot understand where you are coming from with your three-star review of Tomb Raider III. True, there are still failings with the game engine but they are more than made up for by the sheer scale of the game and the beautiful scenery and locations. What really wound me up is your insistence that Tomb Raider II is the better game. The second game was just awful – with relentless bad guys and some of the most monotonous levels ever. Plus a storyline which told you the outcome straightaway.TRIII is graphically better, twice the size (near enough), non-linear, with better AI, terrific locations and a storyline which genuinely draws you in.

Nev Blenkinsopp, via email

I'd like to register my shock at your review of Tomb Raider III. I'm afraid I can't agree – it's much better than that. The 3D card support is a terrific improvement – the new coloured lighting is truly phenomenal. As for the gameplay, the AI is slightly better and most levels are as involving as ever. Let me reassure you though – after reading your magazine cover-to-cover for about two years now – I reckon this is the first mistake you've made.

Conrad McBride, Newbury

After many weeks of anticipation awaiting the release of Tomb Raider III I think it's a complete disgrace the way it has been delivered for sale to the public. Here's why. Artificial intelligence: the adversaries were supposed to be far better than any previous games. Balderdash! These adversaries offer no fresh challenge whatsoever. As for new weapons, the only decent introduction is the Desert Eagle. The Harpoon Gun is a useless lump of metal that does not auto-aim properly – you may as well give Lara underwater boxing gloves. I cannot find any practical use for the Rocket Launcher except maybe lighting up the path of these not so new invisible platforms.

On the vehicle front, the Quad bike handles about as well as as a Lada Riva Saloon with a flat tyre. The Underwater Propulsion Unit would be OK if it did not keep getting trapped in the graphics. And what about the Canoe? The Internet is buzzing with pleas for anyone who can paddle it correctly and instruct accordingly…

Regarding the graphics – I am running 800x600 on high-res 16-bit colour with the gamma setting at 6. It is still lumpy and contains corners with see-through vision. Lara has been trapped in the graphics in hundreds of places – some of them requiring a complete restart to the game. Certain areas contain graphic items that slow her movements down tremendously. So much for the much vaunted triangular graphic mechanics…

Tomb Raider III has all the hallmarks of a hastily prepared sequel that does no justice to the two previous games.

Prof Barrington, via email

Are those Yank charts for real, or do you make them up five minutes before the magazine is published? I thought the Americans were meant to have a little sense but what country in its right mind could have two hunting games in its top two slots? Don't they sell Half-Life or Unreal over there? PS Please plug my Carmageddon site: www.the-harpers.force9.co.uk/carma/

Dan, via email

I'm afraid to say the charts are the official US ones compiled by PC Data. They must just love their hunting games, bless 'em.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

OK, I'm totally fed up now. Why can't game publishers get the minimum PC configurations on their boxes right. The cynical among us would suggest that understating the minimum spec is just a way of making extra sales. Since the publishers seem incapable of telling us what we need, how about you doing it – how about including in your reviews a Decent Gaming Experience specification? That's all gamers are looking for at the end – good entertainment. And not to end up having to run round a half-empty training pitch.

Ben Ward, via email

We agree completely. By a coincidence we've also been discussing this issue ourselves. We are committed to publishing some form of Decent Gaming Experience spec with our reviews, and we're looking at the best and simplest way of doing it

What a joy Internet gaming is. It has to be the greatest invention ever. Playing Quake II on Barrysworld finally convinced me that there is a point in living. The only thing that would make it better would be some sort of distinction between Good Players (like yourselves) and Bad Players (like me). Why can't we have some organisation? It does novices no good whatsoever to get shot apart as soon as they enter the Deathmatch arena.

Ben Ward (again), aka Barry Shovel, via email

PS. Enclosed is my skin. Professional? No.Tasteful? Yes indeed.

Barrysworld plays host to a lot of experienced fraggers and it can be frustrating for new arrivals. There

Sing when you're winning, you only sing when you're winning...

are plenty of servers where the standard is less, shall we say, intense. Try the Easynet, Cix or ClaraNet servers. Some servers also run 'Quake academy' nights for new players, too. As for the skin, um... scary. Hope ti doesn't start a trend – the thought of entire servers in Millwall shirts for example, fills us with dread.

TO CONTACT US WRITE TO: PC Gaming World Letters, Ziff Davis, International House, 1 St Katharine's Way E1 9UN. Or fax us on 0171 903 6005 or email us on pcgw_mail@zd.com. The author of the most downright interesting, funny or informative letter each issue will be the proud recipient of a bottle of the world-famous, golden amber firewater better known as Jack Daniels Tennessee Sippin' Whiskey*. Yee harr... *(* You must be aged 18 or over to get the JD. If you're under 18 we'll send you a six-pack of Irn Bru)*

ADVENTURE GAMING
IS RE-BORN
The best selling King's Quest series is back. Creator, Roberta Williams brings you the magic in an all new 3D environment. Explore the world of Daventry as it's never been seen before, and if you are lucky, return to tell the tale.
Seven worlds, three dimensions and one indescribable adventure.
KING'S QUEST
MASK OF ETERNITY
SIERRA
www.sierra-online.co.uk
For further information contact: Cendant Software UK, 2 Beacontree Plaza, Gillette Way, Reading, Berkshire RG2 0BS Tel: 0118 920 9111

- The ultimate Snow Board experience
- Stunning 3D graphics & superb sound
- Incredible sensation of speed with excellent controlability
- Keyboard, joystick and joypad features available
- 6 highly exciting tracks: “Boardercross (3)”, “Big Jump Race (2) ” and “Multitrack Stadium” with 3 ramps of different altitude
- 3 different options: Ghostchase, Time Attack & Surfer Rules
- Special bonus: “Xtreme Tour” where you compete on all tracks
- Multiplayer option available

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
- Pentium 133 Mhz
- 16 Mb Ram
- SVGA with 4 Mb 3D accelerator card
- 4 speed CD Rom
- Soundcard DirectX 5.0 compatible
- Windows 95
- Keyboard, joystick or gamepad

www.gamesarena.com

Midas Interactive Entertainment BV.
Ekkersrijt 7318
5692 HH Son
Holland
Tel. +31 (0)499 - 475 936 • Fax +31 (0)499 - 476 046

Midas Interactive Entertainment Ltd.
24a Nelson Road
Greenwich, London
SE10 9JB England
Tel. 0181 293 7110 • Fax 0181 293 0263

PC GAMING WORLD

Ziff-Davis UK, International House, 1 St Katharine's Way, London E1 9UN Tel: 0171 903 6800, Fax: 0171 903 6005 • Email: pcgw_mail@zd.com • Web: http://www.pcgw.co.uk

Editorial
Editor-in-Chief: David Kelly (email: david_kelly@zd.com)
Managing Editor: Alan Dykes (email: alan_dykes@zd.com)
Reviews Editor: Cal Jones (email: cal_jones@zd.com)
Associate Editor: John Bennett (email: elvis_bacon@zd.com)
New Media Editor: Mat Bettinson (email: matt_bettinson@zd.com)
Art Editor: Lee Smith (email: lee_smith@zd.com)
Production Editor: Ian Marsh (email: ian_marsh@zd.com)

Section Editors:
Incoming: Cal Jones • Simulations/Space: Rowan Jackson • Action: John Bennett • Classic/Puzzles: Naomi MacKay • Strategy/Wargaming: Martin Croft • Sports: Alan Dykes • Adventure/RolePlaying: Cal Jones • Online: Mat Bettinson • Top Gear: John Bennett • Books: Martin Croft • Multimedia: Naomi MacKay • Contributing Editor: John Houlihan

Additional contributors:
Art: Gordon Barrick • Production: Julie Fuller, Ziggy Opoczynska • Articles: Denny Atkin, Gordon Barrick, Ken Brown, Loyd Case, Robert Coffey, Jeff Green, Paul Ditta, Tom Gordon, Craig Paterson, Mat Peck, Joan Bye, Yoni Takeda, Johnny Wilson, Mark Heathcote, Pat Fox, Martin Courteney, Mike Allen, Kerry Fraser-Robinson

Advertising & Marketing:
Sales Manager: Justine Shannon justine_shannon@zd.com • Account Manager: Dean Mather dean_mather@zd.com • Account Exec: Danielle Mullen danielle_mullen@zd.com • Marketing Assistant: Vicki Timmons

Production:
Production Director: Joanne Hurst • Production Manager: Jackie Bryant Production Controllers: Scot Matthews, Warren Head

Circulation:
Circulation Director: Tim Moore • Newsstand Circulation Manager: Wendy Sly • Subscriptions Manager: Helen Knight • Key Account Manager: Peter Hague • Circulation Assistant: Rachel Beresford
If you have problems obtaining your PC Gaming World in your local newsagent call: 0171 903 6920

Publishing
Publisher: David Kelly

Computer Gaming World (US):
Editor-in-Chief: Johnny Wilson (email: jwilson@zd.com)
Executive Editor: Ken Brown (email:ken_brown@zd.com)
Publisher: Lee Uniake (email:luniake@zd.com)

Ziff-Davis UK:
Managing Director: David Craver • Vice President & Group Publishing Director: Shobhan Gajjar • Finance Director: Peta Turnbull • Editorial Director: Tony Westbrook • Research Manager: Andrew Dyer

ZD Net UK:
Editor-in-Chief: Eugene Lacey • UK Webmaster: Chris Lewis • Gamespot UK Editor: Ian Howie • Gamespot UK Webmaster: Asher Rospigliosi • Commercial Director: Steve Jessop • Associate Publisher: Steve Malone

Ziff-Davis Publishing:
President: Michael Perlis • Vice Presidents/Managing Directors Europe: David Craver and Michael Scharfenberger• Vice President Europe, Sales & Marketing: Frank Kelcz • Business Manager – European Operations: June Bodie • Director ZD Labs (Europe): Edward Henning • Director, International Sales & Marketing: Elisabeth Paredes • European Marketing Services Director: Lisbet Sherlock

Ziff-Davis Inc:
Chairman and CEO: Eric Hippeau

Origination & Colour reproduction by Lumis Colour • Printed and bound by St Ives (Plymouth) • Finished and mailed by Allec Mailing Services, St Austell • Distributed by MarketForce (UK) Ltd, 247 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 4N. Tel: 0171 261 5555 Printed in Great Britain. ISSN 1365-6694.
Ziff-Davis UK Limited, registered office: 1 Silk Street, London EC2Y 8HQ. Company No. 2583304. Registered in England

Whilst we take considerable effort to ensure the information published in PC Gaming World is accurate to the best of our available knowledge at the time of press, we cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage resulting either directly or indirectly from any inaccuracy in the published material.

Subscriptions and back issues:
PC Gaming World, Ziff-Davis UK, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 9EF Credit Card Orders: 01858 438803 (9am-9pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat); Fax: 01858 432164 • email: zdfsubs@tower.talmie.com Subscriptions: UK one year (12 issues): £29.97 UK two year £54.97 Overseas subscribers (including Eire) please add £12.00 per year for postage Back issues: £5.00 each including post and packing

PC Gaming World © 1999 Ziff Davis UK Ltd

ABC AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS CONSUMER PRESS
Member of Audit Bureau of Circulation

It's looking good. Really good. And the suspense is almost too much to bear. What game could we be talking of? C&C: Tiberian Sun – the next episode of the most successful and most popular PC game ever. The last installment, Command & Conquer: Red Alert, is the UK's biggest selling title. It's also the best PC game ever – as voted by you. C&C: Tiberian Sun – due now very early April and extensively previewed this issue – is a huge gaming event. Over two years in the making, the game has stacks of improvements: exciting new units and weapons, multi-layered and 3D-deformable terrain, troop experience rankings, greatly enhanced troop pathing and adversary AI – all set in a playing area double the size of Red Alert. Heaven indeed!

> Over two years in the making, C&C Tiberian Sun is a huge gaming event

We can't wait. But we will wait. And we'd rather wait to have it right when it arrives. The release date set by Westwood's new owners, Electronic Arts, is just before the Easter weekend. Please, EA, don't feel tempted to hurry the release to catch seasonal sales – as we've arguably seen before with Quake II, SiN and recently Falcon 4.0. It's not worth it and it's not good for gaming. I get more letters these days on the subject of declining standards of pre-release playtesting than anything else. It seems developers are being pressured like never before to deliver on release schedules.

It's easy to see why this is occurring. Over the last twelve months there's been a remarkable consolidation in the gaming business. A flurry of mergers and acquisitions has reduced the number of publishers from 52 down to 30. And just nine of these now dominate the picture: Electronic Arts (Bullfrog, Fox, MGM, Origin, Firaxis, Westwood, Maxis, Accolade, EA Sports, Jane's), Activision, Eidos, The Learning Company (Mindscape, Red Orb), Hasbro (MicroProse), Cendant (Sierra, Blizzard), GT, Infogrames and Microsoft.

It's easy to see why, from a publisher's point of view, games get shipped early – these mega-publishers are driven by suits who can apply a lot of pressure. It's no surprise that Falcon 4.0, four years in the making, is released soon after MicroProse's acquisition by toy giant Hasbro. And while you can't exactly blame Hasbro (the Falcon 4.0 development team has even been seen sporting t-shirts with four year's worth of attempted and missed release 'tour' dates), it could certainly have benefited from some further bug-fixing.

This corporate-isation of gaming is bad for gamers if it diminishes the influence of the key creative folk in the development process. And it's why some established authors are moving to become packagers – completing their games first, before cutting the publishing deal. Geoff Crammond has been noticably quiet on the follow-up to F1GP2, Chris Sawyer (see feature this issue) says he did much of the development work on RollerCoaster Tycoon before involving a publisher, and the wish for more independence must surely have been a factor in Peter Molyneux's decision to leave Bullfrog to set up Lion Head Studios. Let's hope Westwood is sensible enough to resist any temptation to release Tiberian Sun early, just to ship in time for Easter.

David Kelly, Editor-in-chief
Contact David by letter, or by email at david_kelly@zd.com

A STRATEGY GAME THAT RUNS ON A TOTALLY DIFFERENT KIND OF ENGINE.

www.godgames.com

PopTop Software

TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE SOFTWARE

PC CD

RAILROAD TYCOON II

The original Railroad Tycoon is a legend in the gaming community, however Railroad Tycoon II will raise the standard another notch

Gold Award - PC Format

One of the most graphically sumptuous strategy games ever to grace a PC screen.

90% - PC Format

Breathtaking state-of-the-art graphics

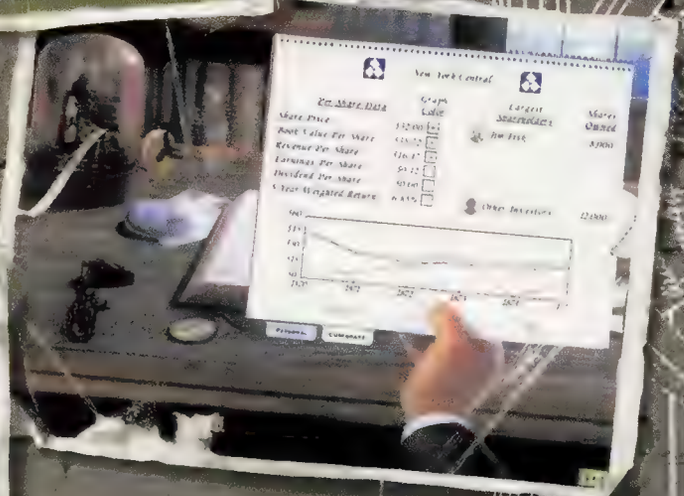
5 out of 5 - PC Gaming World

With many new features and strikingly realistic graphics, Railroad Tycoon II could well be the most anticipated game of the month

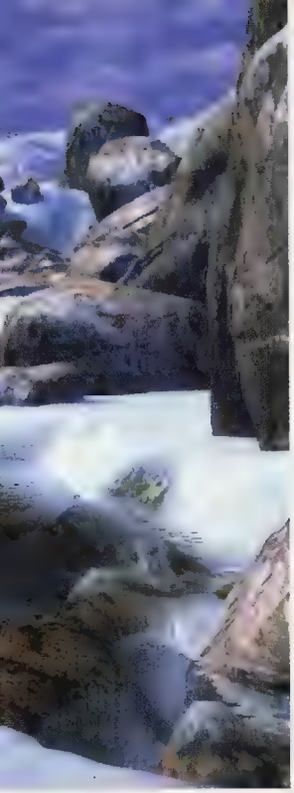
Ultimate PC

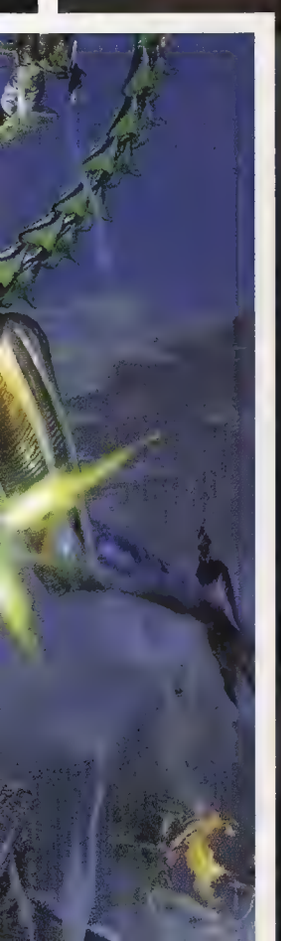
The game is still the classic beast it was, with added extras for the latest hardware

PC Zone



EYE CANDY





ABOVE FAR LEFT:
[illegible] wastes and [illegible] Cooper LeGrey

BELOW LEFT:
[illegible] Predator: When the [illegible] gets tough, running away [illegible] good to us...

THIS PAGE:
Smile please – meet the things with [illegible] dentist's bills from Soulbringer

PC GAMER **91%**

« MONOLITH HAVE CREATED A SINGULAR, IMAGINATIVE, AND FABULOUSLY ENTERTAINING EXPERIENCE... A BIG, BRASH BUCKET LOAD OF FUN. WITH ADDED ROBOTS. »

PC ZONE **92%**

« WITH STRONG IDENTIFIABLE CHARACTERS, STYLISH ANIMATIONS, AND AN EVER EVOLVING PLOT, IT IS A GAME THAT DRAWS YOU IN FROM THE BEGINNING TO END ».

GAME OF THE MONTH
PC GAMER
Christmas 1998

PC ZONE CLASSIC

IT'S NOT THE SIZE OF YOUR WEAPON THAT COUNTS...

- Choose to pilot one of four transformable Mobile Combat Armor units (MCAs)
- Two modes of play – on foot and in MCA
- True 3D environments with realistic lighting, indoor levels, vast outdoor terrains, and awesome effects

- Over 30 challenging enemies that use the environment to their advantage, activate alarms, or spring traps
- Dynamic storyline and goal-based mission structure evol-ves based on your actions

MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS
WWW.LITH.COM

LITHTECH ENGINE

PC CD ROM

WINDOWS™95/98

MICROÏDS
WWW.MICROIDS.COM

SHOGO 昇剛

Mobile Armor Division

IT'S WHERE YOU STICK IT !

- Separate MCA and on-foot arsenals for a total of 18 pum-ped-up weapons
- Multiplayer action includes built-in Internet, LAN, and mo-dem support
- Full Direct3D support for superior graphics performance

HMV

PC WORLD
THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE

GAME

> EXCLUSIVELY REPRESENTED BY MEDIA CONNECTION IN THE UK

> AVAILABLE NOW IN ALL GOOD OUTLETS...

> FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SHOGO
VISIT OUR WEB SITES AT
WWW.LITH.COM / WWW.SHOGO-MAD.COM /
WWW.MICROIDS.COM

MAIL ORDER: SPECIAL RESERVE

the missing link to your software

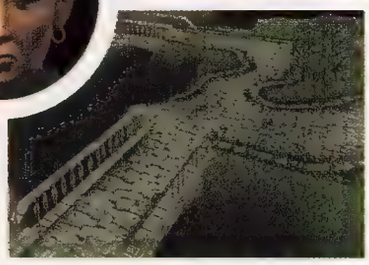
MEDIA CONNECTION

© 1998 MICROÏDS. © 1998 MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ADVENTURE & ROLEPLAYING

SOULBRINGER

PUBLISHER: Gremlin
DEVELOPER: In-house



Weird. But a genre can all but self-destruct and then suddenly be reborn. Hot on the heels of last month's Baldur's Gate, Soulbringer is another highly promising roleplaying game.

It's actually the first games project for producer Don Kirkland. Before that he programmed databases, although roleplaying – both pen and paper and computer based – has always been his first love.

Although you'd classify Soulbringer as a roleplaying game, it has much in common with adventure games. It has a strong, well-defined plot and although you can go off and do your own thing if the whim takes you, you never have so much freedom that you lose sight of the plot altogether. Certain events are 'flagged' and must be completed before the story can progress, and if you doggedly stick to your own path, completing sub-quest after sub-quest, you will eventually run out of things to do and must then tackle the major event in question.

Sub-quests are important, however. Although most are not essential to completing the game, they will give you experience, information and items that make your life later on a whole lot easier. More to the point, by avoiding them you will be missing out on huge chunks of gameplay. Soulbringer is immense: if you take on a lot of sub-quests you can be playing for around 100 hours. Without, your game time could be halved, but it will be more difficult.

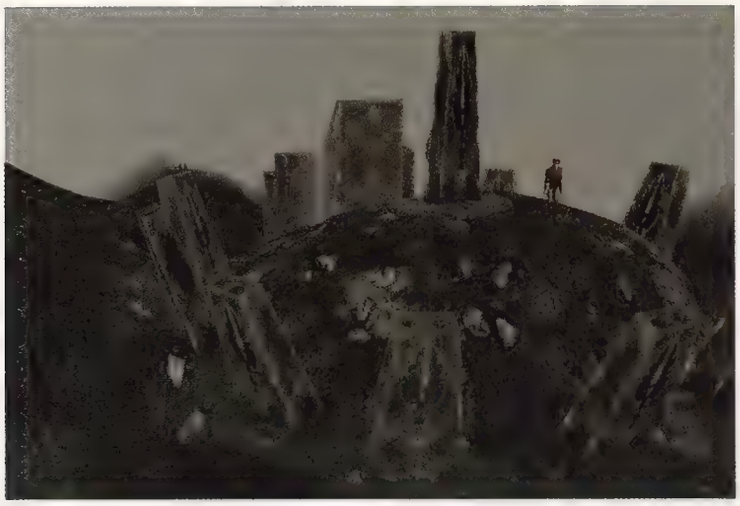
The story itself starts long before the beginning of the game, with seven powerful demons intent on ruling the world. Although the demons' flesh could be destroyed, their spirits could not, making them almost, but not quite, invincible. One man, Harbinger, took on the task of ridding the world of these demons by destroying their bodies and then imprisoning their spirits in a crystal, which he would then destroy in the Well of Souls. Unfortunately, while Harbinger managed to capture six of the demons in this manner, he died before the seventh could be restrained. The seventh released his companions, and they have now managed to possess the bodies of powerful rulers around the world.

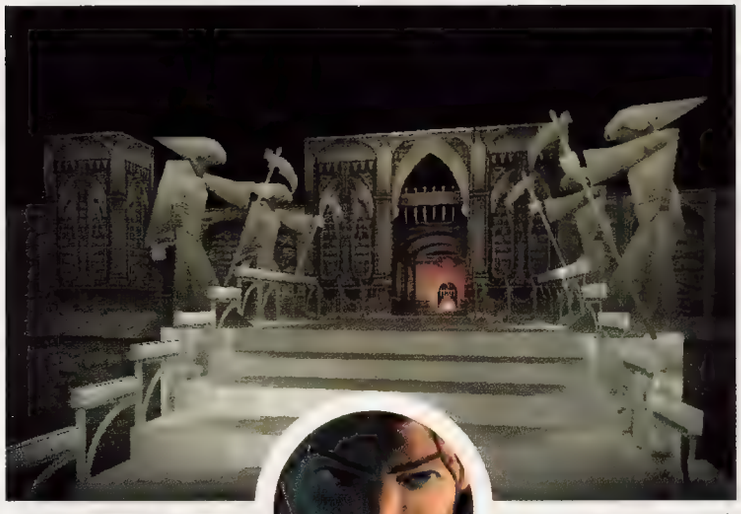
Clearly, they need to be stopped...

Gremlin has tried to make the character you play as much of a blank sheet as possible, so that you can have more control over who he is and thus identify with him. His gender and appearance is pre-determined, but you determine his name, stats, background and magical ability. Even these aren't set in stone, however, since the character develops throughout the game and his stats and skills (as well as just hit points) can be boosted.

Unlike most roleplaying games, your hero actually has a home – an ethereal tower populated by the ghosts of Harbinger's friends. Not only can you consult these ghosts, which include a librarian, a witch and an alchemist, but you can come here at any time to rest, store items, summon familiars, and cut down on travel time by using teleportation points known as hex stones.

Travel is limited to walking or running, teleportation (which can't be achieved straight away in the game) and occasionally you will have to buy





passage on a boat. The longest distance you may have to travel is five miles, which will take quite a bit of time. Fortunately, travel through the world is highly eventful, thanks to both the things and people you encounter, and the lavish landscapes.

The graphics are 3D, but give an isometric-type perspective, and you can control the direction of your view using the right mouse button. The terrain itself has been generated using polygons, which give a wide variety of terrain types – you'll be visiting castles, rainforest, desert, rocky areas and snow, plus whole towns and villages. Although it will run smoother and faster with a 3D card, it still looks good in software mode, even in 8-bit, which will be a blessing to anyone who doesn't have the latest hardware.

Kirkland's own experience of sword and axe fighting through historical re-enactment societies in his native New Zealand means that the battles are particularly impressive, with weapons being deployed in a most realistic manner.

Fighting isn't too hard to master. You have a list of moves available on the right of the screen, and just click on the one you want to move or string some together in a sequence which you can access with one click.

The game engine supports up to 40 people on screen at once, meaning you'll have some pretty impressive battles without much effect on frame rate. Gremlin is also promising to release extra levels, characters (there are about 115 speaking non-player characters as it is) and items via the Web, which can easily be patched in.

While Soulbringer will only need about 200Mb of hard drive space, it will come on two or three CDs, with disc swapping moments made as convenient as possible. It's looking very good indeed.

THE PITCH: Huge, epic and impressive roleplaying game from the maker of Realms Of The Haunting

THE PROSPECTS: After appetites have been whetted by Fallout 2 and Baldur's Gate, this should go down very nicely indeed

DUE: Summer

FACTS

Take 2 takes Talonsoft

Take 2 has acquired strategy specialist TalonSoft, developer of the popular Battleground wargame series. TalonSoft's forthcoming titles in the UK will now be released by Take 2 and not previous publisher Empire. Western Front will be the last Talonsoft title published by Empire, which retains rights to its current back catalogue

Free SimCity!

SimCity is 10 years old, and to celebrate, developer Maxis is making it available on the Web. This original version of Will Wright's famous city building simulation will run on an 8086 machine with only 640K RAM. You can download it from www.SimCity.com

Commandos missions

Commandos, the popular real-time strategy game from Pyro Studios, is getting an add-on mission disk titled Commandos: Beyond the Call of Duty. Comprising eight missions, it will be released in March. meanwhile, Commandos II is expected this autumn

GT goes shopping

GT Interactive has acquired Reflections, developer of the successful Destruction Derby games and the much anticipated Driver, as well as forthcoming action adventure Steam. GT also splashed out on adventure specialist Legend Entertainment, best known as creator of John Saul's Blackstone Chronicles

Role for Westwood

Strongly tipped roleplaying game Swords And Sorcery: Come Devils, Come Darkness has found a home at Westwood. Created by DW Bradley, the creative force behind the last three Wizardry games, it will be the first game he has worked on to feature a 3D world. It's mostly conventional fantasy, but feline and elephantine races stand alongside the usual elves and dwarfs

PIPELINE

Ultimate Soc Man 98 Add-on	Sierra Sports	Sports	15 Jan
Saga: Rage Of The Vikings	Cryo Interactive	Str/War	15 Jan
Combat Pilot	The Associates	Sim/Space	15 Jan
Deer Hunter 2	Wizard Works	Sports	15 Jan
Europress Family Encyc	Europress	Multimedia	15 Jan
Football World Manager	Ubi Soft	Sports	15 Jan
NFR: Natural Fawn Killers	One Stop	Action	15 Jan
Ultimate Soc Man Seasn Ed	Sierra Sports	ReReleases	15 Jan
King's Quest VIII: M Of E	Sierra	Adv/RPG	15 Jan
Quest For Glory V: Drgn Fire	Sierra	Adv/RPG	22 Jan
Tellurian Defence	Psygnosis	Sim/Space	22 Jan
Mayday!!	Take 2	Action	22 Jan
Close Combat III	Microsoft	Str/War	22 Jan
Golf 99	Microsoft	Sports	22 Jan
TransAm Racing	GT Interactive	Action	29 Jan
Power Chess 2	Sierra	C & P	29 Jan
StarCraft: Broodwars	Blizzard	Str/War	29 Jan
Premier Manager 99	Gremlin	Sports	29 Jan
Pro 18 World Tour Golf	Psygnosis	Sports	29 Jan
Worms Armageddon	MicroProse	Str/War	29 Jan
Great Britain Scenery 3	Take 2	Sim/Space	Jan
Screamer Injection	Virgin	ReReleases	Jan
Eliminator	Psygnosis	Action	5 Feb
Heavy Gear II	Activision	Str/War	5 Feb
Championship Manager 3	Eidos	Sports	5 Feb
Lands Of Lore III	Westwood	Adv/RPG	5 Feb
Mega Man X3	Capcom Eurosft	Action	5 Feb
Mega Man X4	Capcom Eurosft	Action	5 Feb
SimCity 3000	Maxis	Str/War	5 Feb
A Bug's Life Game	Disney	Action	5 Feb
Command & Conquer	EA Classics	ReReleases	5 Feb
Monkey Island Ad Pack	LucasArts Clas	ReReleases	5 Feb
Rainbow Six: Eagle Watch	Take 2	Str/War	5 Feb
Myth II: Soulblighter	GT Interactive	Str/War	9 Feb
Fighter Squadron	Activision	Sim/Space	12 Feb
Rollerball	Fox Interactive	Sports	12 Feb
CliC Megabox	Westwood	ReReleases	12 Feb
3D Ultra Pinball 4	Sierra	C & P	12 Feb
Gabriel Knight Anthology	Sierra Originals	ReReleases	12 Feb
Wing Commander: Proph	EA Classics	ReReleases	12 Feb
Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri	Firaxis	Str/War	19 Feb
Return To Krondor	Sierra Studios	Adv/RPG	19 Feb
Lander	Psygnosis	Action	19 Feb
PGA Golf 99	Sierra Sports	Sports	19 Feb
Starsiege	Sierra	Action	19 Feb
Lion King 2 Simba's Pride	Disney	Action	19 Feb
Head Games Range	Activision	Action	19 Feb
Viper Racing	Sierra	Action	19 Feb
Viva Football	Virgin Interact	Sports	26 Feb
NASCAR Revolution	Electronic Arts	Sim/Space	26 Feb
Civilization: Call to Power	Activision	Str/War	26 Feb
F-16 Aggressor	Virgin	Simulation	26 Feb
Age Of Empires Gold	Microsoft	ReReleases	26 Feb
Lands Of Lore	EA Classics	ReReleases	26 Feb
Monkey Hero	Take 2	Action	Feb
Multimed Encycloped 99	Grolier	Multimedia	Feb
Dragonflight: Chin Of Pern	Grolier	Adv/RPG	Feb
Resident Evil	White Label	ReReleases	Feb
Bio Freaks	GT Interactive	Action	Feb
Unreal Level Editor	GT Interactive	Action	Feb
Unreal Mega Pack	GT Interactive	ReReleases	Feb
Tank Racer	Grolier	Action	Feb
TOCA Touring Car 2	Codemasters	Sim/Space	Feb
Warhamr 40000: Chaos Gate	Mindscape	Str/War	Feb
Liath	Black Friar	Adv/RPG	Feb
Battle Of Britain	Take 2	Str/War	Feb
California Speed	GT Interactive	Action	Feb
Baja 1000 Racing	Red Orb	Action	Feb
Star Trek TNG: First Cont	MicroProse	Action	Feb
Tonic Trouble	Ubi Soft	Adv/RPG	Feb
Machines	Acclaim	Sim/Space	Feb
Malkari	I-Magic	Str/War	Feb
Extreme Warfare	Red Orb	Str/War	Feb
Shadows Company	I-Magic	Str/War	Feb
Cabela's Big Game Hunt 2	Activision	Sports	Feb

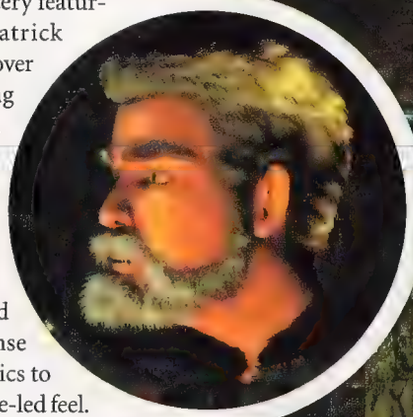
Compiled with assistance from HMV

ADVENTURE & ROLEPLAYING

LANDS OF LORE III

LABEL: Westwood Studios
DEVELOPER: In-house

The Lands Of Lore saga stretches back nearly seven years with Westwood Studios' original fantasy tale of swords and sorcery featuring actor Patrick Stewart as voiceover for the then King of Gladstone. That first game cut a fine figure as a first-person graphic roleplaying game that strayed away from intense character statistics to a more adventure-led feel. Its follow-up developed a theme from the original, that of shape-shifting, and its central character morphed between a human being, a monster and a lizard. This ended up being even more of a straightforward adventure than an roleplaying game. Now though, Lands Of Lore III moves back towards traditional roleplaying game values, with your character joining guilds, completing quests for weapons, spells and objects and being aided by a familiar.



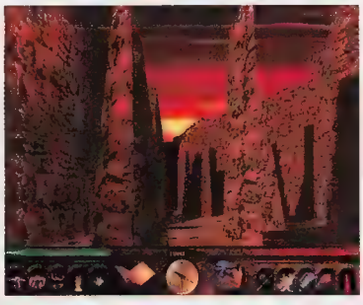
The background story in Lands Of Lore III is anything but conventional though, combining the medieval fantasy schtick associated with roleplaying games with an added healthy smattering of science fiction and even horror fantasy.

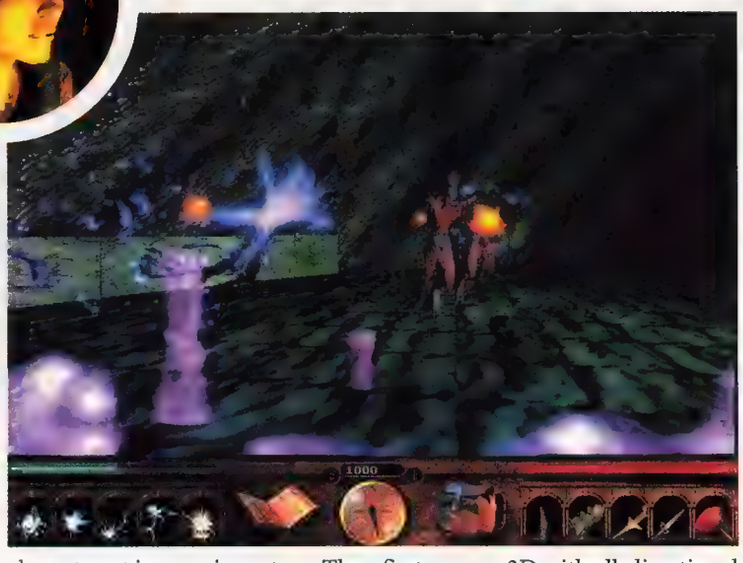
The central character is known as Copper LeGray, the illegitimate son of King Eric, one of Richard's successors. The Draracle, a sort of self-appointed guardian of magic who watched over Gladstone has departed into other-world retirement, and in his absence things are going haywire. Portals have opened up throughout the land, allowing strange beasts and phenomena to enter and begin destroying Gladstone. When Eric LeGray is killed by these beasts, you, as the young Copper resolve to try to rescue the world.

Much of the game is set in the land and city of Gladstone from which the other dimensional portals open up – desert, underworld, volcanic caves, frozen wastes and the Ruloi (other characters from the series) homeworld. All these present adversaries, non-player characters to interrogate, and clues to the mysteries of the game. There are also other hidden, unexpected turns and portals that appear and make life more intriguing.

Back in Gladstone you equip yourself for the task by joining one, or indeed all of the four guilds – warrior, wizard, thief or cleric – and the various weapons, abilities and spells you will need to complete your quest will become available. You'll also gain the assistance of a powerful familiar who helps you physically and gives you advice – sometimes rather more than you need…

As a warrior you obtain strength and weapons skills like 'Mighty Blow', while as a thief you get more undercover abilities like sniping and picking locks – the latter allowing





you, among other things, to gain entrance to the sewers under Gladstone and use them for a fast getaway. Spells are both offensive and defensive and all characters, regardless of class, will have access to at least some spells. Although the main storyline is quite linear, the guild aspect is not, and you can make your own mind up how, and indeed if, you want to do things.

Food needs to be consumed to stay healthy and comes from a variety of sources – for instance, if you kill pigs and pick them up, you'll find pork chops to eat in your inventory. The game has a sense of humour too, there is one stage where, if you walk to the water's edge in Gladstone, you might just be able to catch a fish jumping beside the quay. This apparently has two uses – eat it and you'll develop a temporary rear fisheye view, otherwise you can use it as a formidable weapon by swinging it at enemies.

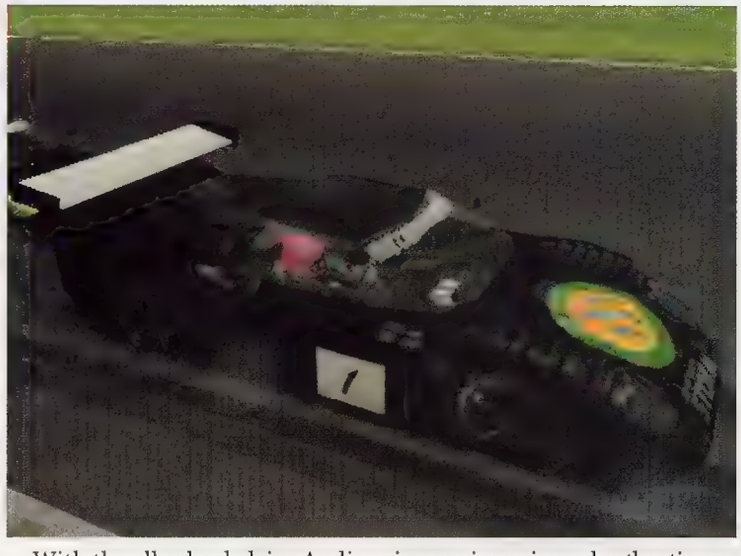
The game view and interface is in first-person 3D with all-directional vision using the mouse to direct your character's gaze. Movement can be handled by clicking wherever you want to go, although Quake-style cursor and mouse control can also be used. Inventory is automatic and when you move the cursor over an interactive object a hand appears and you can pick it up or use it. Picking things up gives you a rather unusual star-spangled effect, rather like having computerised pixie dust being sprinkled around the screen. Each object is explained fully when you click over it in the inventory.

Lands Of Lore III is a gigantic game and the emphasis is on ease of use and clarity, allowing you to get on with the job of playing and enjoying. And it's a game that should appeal to both fantasy roleplaying game and adventure fans alike.

THE PITCH: A huge roleplaying game with an adventure sugar coating and lush 3D graphics

THE PROSPECTS: An exciting departure for roleplaying games and fans of the genre alike

DUE: 5 February



SIMULATION

TOCA 2 TOURING CARS

PUBLISHER: Codemasters
DEVELOPER: In-house

Nudging the rear bumper of the top-selling Playstation version, Codemasters' re-creation of the 1998 British Touring Car Championship is flat out in 6th gear and headed for a PC near you.

Thanks to the official licence, TOCA 2 features all the cars, teams, drivers (including part-timer Nigel Mansell) from last years' championship and all eight authentic tracks including Brands Hatch, Silverstone and Donnington. Each has been modelled using Ordnance Survey landscape data, but for the more adventurous motorist a selection of fantasy tracks will also be available. Fancy flouting the law on some public A-roads? Or how about scorching round a Bavarian town or shattering the peace of a picturesque Scottish loch?

In line with 1998 BTCC rule changes, pit stops facilitating tyre changes and repairs will add an intriguing tactical dimension to the frantic track action. Especially as the fickle British weather can now turn nasty mid-race, forcing a switch to grooved wet tyres. With three skill levels available, gameplay options will cater for single races, time trials, and arcade style battle challenges plus the full championship season.

With the all-wheel-drive Audis consigned to the history books, the series is now exclusively front-wheel-driven, but there's some excellent news for tail-slide tearaways like me. Gamers can get a fix of opposite lock by competing in the seven supporting championships that regularly support BTCC meetings. As well as the touring cars, players can grab the keys to Ford Fiestas and Formula Fords, thundering Lister Storms, TVRs, Jag XJ220s, AC Superblowers – even the bizarre three-wheeled Grinnall Scorpions.

Each car will have its own cockpit view, engine noise and authentic suspension dynamics.

A fender-bending burn-up around two tracks and all-too-much of the surrounding scenery revealed a host of improvements over the original TOCA formula (hailed as a classic in our January issue last year). Illuminated by real-time light sourcing shining through translucent, bug-encrusted windscreens, you can even see drivers being thrown around by G-forces. Flocks of pigeons perch beside the track, ready to scatter if you get it all wrong and realistic damage effects now include cracked

windscreens, crumpled bonnets and even missing body panels. But this level of detail comes at a price: the bad news for owners of malnourished machinery is that the minimum spec's likely to be a PII 300 *plus* Voodoo 2 card.

As well as cars that look the part, the handling models have enjoyed a revamp too. Physics models have been reworked to provide more progressive handling. I found it's now much easier to catch slides with a swift flick of opposite lock. In the pursuit of victory, players will be able to alter car setups and hone cornering, braking, acceleration and skid control abilities on a wide selection of test tracks.

Much of the original games' appeal came from the thrill of close contact racing against believable opposition. AI has been further tuned to equip the computer-controlled drivers with enough grey matter to pick varied cornering lines, move over when being lapped and even choose their own pit strategies. For the ultimate challenge, network support for up to eight human drivers should provide the ideal vehicle to settle the office championship.

We're slightly concerned that TOCA 2 lacks the pin-sharp visual qualities of titles like Sierra's Grand Prix Legends and Viper Racing. But the nifty Colin McRae Rally-style replay feature and Codemasters' characteristic sprinkling of cheats and bonuses should redress the balance.

From what we've seen, this eagerly awaited sequel comes fully loaded with enough new features to secure the TOCA name a spot on the front row of the already crowded driving games grid.

THE PITCH: The definitive simulation of Britain's second favourite motor sport

THE PROSPECTS: TOCA with knobs on, offering better graphics, sweeter handling cars, pit stops and a whole garage of rip-snorting new motors

DUE: February

ACTION

INTERSTATE 82

PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: In-house

For every gamer whose road-rage-fevered brain has just about popped after some inbred half-wit in a battered 4x4 with *Playboy* mud flaps and wheel wells slimed with road-kill splash has swooped past in the overtaking lane to cut them off, take a deep breath and repeat this mantra: Interstate 82, Interstate 82, Interstate 82... Due for a late 1999 release, Activision's sequel to Interstate '76 might provide just enough fast-paced vehicular combat to prevent you from flooring the accelerator and ploughing through that rusty heap until you punch out the occupant's yahoo's gap-toothed grin with the sparkling chrome of your front grille.

As soon as you get behind the wheel you'll notice the game has been completely overhauled. Gone is the instrumentation tracking the condition of your ride's various systems. In its place is a health bar showing your total hit points – a health bar is similarly displayed over targeted enemies. For gamers who loved Interstate '76's challenge of coping with failing weapons or handling an increasingly damaged and unresponsive car, Interstate may not be the ride they're hoping for.

As disappointing as this may be to fans of the first game, the designers feel strongly that moving to more stripped-down, fundamental action is the road to wider success. To that end, they've also simplified mission goals, paring down the action to fewer, less complex objectives. This isn't to say that missions have degenerated to little more than 'kill 'em all' free-for-alls. On the contrary, you'll still have plenty to do. For example, one early mission has you seriously outnumbered. To have any hope of success, you must create a distraction to draw the bad guys out of their cars where they're easily picked off. After that, you must follow a fleeing enemy to his hideout while fending off reinforcements. This mission also spotlights one of Interstate '82's other major changes – pedestrianism.

The ability to abandon your car and hit the ground running impacts on gameplay tremendously. Interstate '82 will measure mission success by whether you've killed the driver, not his car. As long as your enemies live they're a threat, even if their car is a heap of smouldering slag.

Luckily, it's a two-way street. If you see your car's health meter getting perilously low, you can hop out before it explodes and take on your adversary with nothing but a pistol and your good looks. Fortunately, once on foot you have the option of commandeering other vehicles. The addition of gun-toting pedestrians should also significantly alter the multiplayer game, with combatants getting fewer kills as their adversaries flee near-dead cars for the fresh vehicles dotting the landscape.

The game engine will require 3D hardware, but the payoff will be better graphics and more varied missions. By handling the game environments

GAMES TIMELINE

Waiting for that most important game? The PC Gaming World Timeline – adjusted

Entries picked out in Red are new on the PC Gaming World radar for this month

Entries picked out in Blue have changed release date this month

FEB

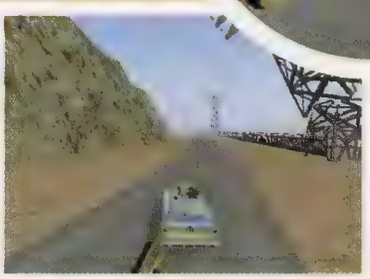
Alpha Centauri
Brian Lara Cricket 99
Championship Manager 3
Dragonflight: Chronicles Of Pern
Heavy Gear II
Jane's World Air Power IAF
Lands of Lore III
Myth II: Soulblighter
NASCAR Revolution
PGA Tour Pro 3D
Premier Manager 99
Pro 18: World Tour Golf
Return to Krondor
Rollerball
SimCity 3000
Star Trek TNG: First Contact
Starship Troopers
Swing
TOCA Touring Car 2

MAR

Age of Empires II: Age of Kings
Aliens Vs Predator
Commandos: Beyond The Call Of Duty
Daikatana
Delta Force
Discworld Noir
Driver
Half-Life Team Fortress
Heroes Of Might & Magic III
Homeworld
Indiana Jones & The Infernal Machine
Interstate '82
Jimmy Whites 2: Cueball
MechWarrior III
Prince Of Persia 3D
Resident Evil 2
RollerCoaster Tycoon
SBK Superbike Championships
Star Wars Force Commander
Star Wars X-Wing Alliance
Total Annihilation: Kingdoms
Wild Metal Country

SPRING

Aironauts
Braveheart
Constructor 2
Duke Nukem Forever
Godzilla
Gunship III
Hostile Waters
Lomu World Cup Rugby '99
Rally Championship 99
Screamer Sports Car Racing



as huge, 3D objects, the designers can create landscapes much more complicated than Interstate '76's flat wastelands. Missions will take place in cities and inside buildings, and will even delve into underground caverns.

While all the visual effects weren't implemented in the early build we played, the reflections of lights and objects on the cars were impressive. The final version will include texture maps to reflect damage, light maps for headlights, ricocheting bullets, and the addition of water and weather. For gamers with some serious horsepower, Interstate '82 will also allow you to set up multiple monitors to create a 'virtual driver's seat'.

In addition to multiplayer-specific maps, all of the mission maps will be available for multiplayer contests. Deathmatching in Interstate '82 should be markedly different from the first game since the full 3D world will add a new vertical element, with drivers battling in tiered parking lots, hiding in tunnels, and exploiting moving terrain elements such as elevators and drawbridges.

So what has carried over from the first Interstate? More than you'd think. If anything, the story is even more developed, with about 30 minutes of rendered cut-scenes featuring the returning Skeeter, Groove Champion, and Taurus (your player character). New characters include Groove's little sister Skye, and John Hinckley – yes, that John Hinckley – in a government conspiracy plot worthy of a particularly over-the-top *X-Files*.

You'll still be able to customise your car, purchasing weapons, armour, and special items, though you'll have more choices. The most interesting new weapon has got to be LARS, an SDI-type device that players can seize control of. In the interests of game balance, all the weapons will have countermeasures.

Interstate '82 will feature a cool, tongue-in-cheek soundtrack. This time around the music will mimic acts like Soft Cell, Killing Joke and the Cars. Even better, three recently discovered, unreleased Devo songs have been remastered and included on the soundtrack.

With a muscular game engine capable of delivering state-of-the art graphics and frame-rates, Interstate '82 seems certain to deliver a more varied and prettier experience than its predecessor. The real question is whether its simpler, more action-oriented gameplay will be able to draw new fans while satisfying those who enjoyed Interstate '76. Until it rolls out of the garage later this year, we'll just have to wait and see.

THE PITCH: Interstate '76 but with more emphasis on action
THE PROSPECTS: Annoying traffic snarl-ups – no problem!
DUE: March

monthly to take account of slippages – will tell you when to expect all the BIG releases

APRIL

Anachronox
Black And White
C&C 2: Tiberian Sun
Descent 3
Excession: Out Of The Void
Gabriel Knight III
Giants
Metal Fatigue
Outcast
SU-27 Flanker 2.0
The Revenant

MAY

Battlezone 2
Cutthroats
Draken

JUNE

Babylon 5: Space Combat Simulator
Dungeon Keeper II
Hired Guns
Ultima Ascension

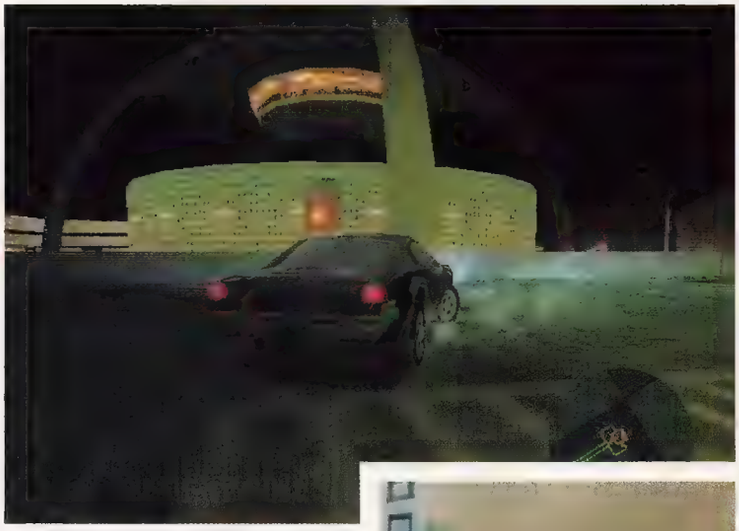
LATER 1999...

Blade
Commandos II
Conquest: Frontier Wars
Cricket World Cup 99
Diablo II
Earthworm Jim 3D
Elric
Expert Pool
Flight Simulator 2000
Flight Unlimited III
Formula 1 Grand Prix 3
Good & Evil
Grand Theft Auto 2
Knockout Kings
Loose Cannon
Max Payne
Messiah
Middle Earth
Navy Seals
Omikron: The Nomad Soul
Prince Naseem Boxing
Prey
Quake III: Arena
Sega Rally Championship 2
Soulbringer
South Park: Deeply Impacted
StarLancer
Star Trek: Secret Of Vulcan Fury
Star Trek: Starfleet Command
System Shock 2
Urban Chaos
Warcraft 3
X-COM: Alliance

ACTION

DRIVER

LABEL: GT Interactive
DEVELOPER: Reflections



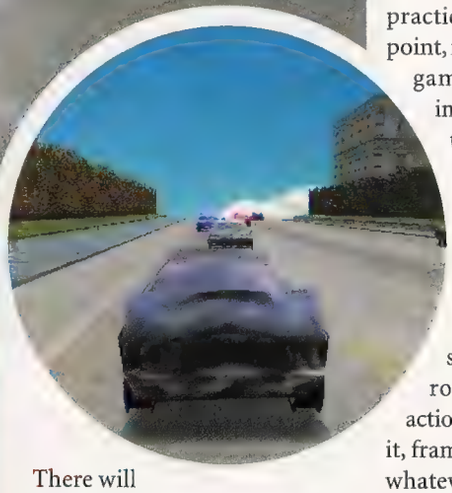
We first introduced Driver to you last summer, claiming it would be the most exciting new action automobile game for years.

It's now due for release this spring and has lost none of its initial attraction. The storyline has changed a tad, though: last time we saw it the central character was just a plain old getaway driver, eking out a living on the mean streets of America's biggest cities. Now, due to the sensibilities of certain overseas markets, he has been remodelled as an undercover cop who is trying to infiltrate the mob by pretending to be just a plain old getaway driver, eking out a living on the mean streets of America's biggest cities. Subtle.

The cities in question are Miami, San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles. Each city has 20 to 30 miles of road and over 150,000 buildings. Although not totally accurate, video footage of the real cities has been used to get the right feel and wherever possible road maps are accurate. Thus you can drive over the Golden Gate bridge in San Francisco, the Brooklyn bridge in New York, check out landmarks like the Chrysler and Empire State buildings, and drive through Hollywood and Beverly hills, and a rotating GPS-style map in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen will show your position and an outline of the street map.

The game has 44 missions which can be played in a relatively non-linear fashion, and you will only have to complete about 25 to finish the game. The scenario is that you operate out of a motel room which contains, by way of a menu system, an answering machine, a television/video and a tool box (system options). Clicking on the answering machine will play recent messages. These will be of three types: a call from the mob with a job, a call from your local, dodgy car dealer to tell you he has some new beauties in stock, or even the odd wrong number where someone calls to order a pizza with all the trimmings.

There will usually be more than one mission option and you can pick and choose what you want to do at a particular time. These missions include pick-up and drop-off jobs, tail jobs, or even running someone off the road. For instance, one mission will have you picking up a cop car which you have to deliver undamaged to the mob, another is to pick up a guy in a taxi and scare the hell out of him with your reckless driving.



There will be approximately 14 different cars which you'll be able to drive. It's not a simulation though, so they lack minute statistics, in fact there isn't even a speedometer. But you'll feel the difference as they get faster and more damage resistant.

They all look the business. When you check out the pictures on this page bear in mind that they're in-game screenshots and not renders – this is what the game actually looks like. Unfortunately none of the cars will carry their real names: manufacturers were worried about having their cars depicted beating a fast retreat from bank heists, which is odd since they tend to use real cars in films.

Your vehicle handles like a true 70s muscle car, with squishy suspension, a skittish rear end and a V8 engine noise that will be music to car fans' ears. This engine sounds cool enough playing Driver from an external rear view, but pop in behind the bonnet and it gets even louder and more convincing. Driver literally throbs.

Control of your car is simple enough to remember, but hard to master. You have two types of acceleration – normal and a kick-down burn rubber – the latter allowing you to burn impressive doughnuts on the tarmac. Then there's the handbrake which locks the back wheels and allows razor-sharp, 90-degree turns (when you master opposite-lock steering) and cop-beating 180s. Other cars on the road behave in the usual manner, stopping at traffic lights, indicating and so on, and you are expected to do the same. If you don't the cops will give chase.

The game has five modes of play – practice, free form driving, checkpoint, mission (the main part of the game) and survival. The latter involves every single cop car in the city chasing you and trying to ram your car off the road, and it's a whizz!

Finally you can turn your chases into movies in the movie director mode, which is accessed via the television/video in your motel room. You select to record an action replay, and then reconstruct it, frame-by-frame if you like, from whatever angle you want – placing cameras in chase cars, in front of your car, on objects, above, and panning and zooming for the most dramatic effect. You can then play your movie back, change it or save and send it to a friend for viewing. This can be quite spectacular when you get chased through car parks and down narrow alleyways, knocking traffic cones and boxes out of the way.

You can almost smell the gasoline and taste the burning rubber in Driver. It will be processor intensive with a minimum (probably bare minimum) of a P200 and hardware acceleration needed, but it's worth it.

THE PITCH: Put the pedal to the metal in a whole host of American muscle cars, then create a film all about your exploits

THE PROSPECTS: It's just like being in a Steve McQueen movie. As soon as word gets out Driver should become one of the biggest hits of the year

DUE: March

SPORT

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

LABEL: Eidos
DEVELOPER: Sports Interactive

The Championship Manager series is the PC's greatest soccer success stories, with just short of 200,000 copies of this game's predecessor sold in the UK alone.

Using a highly involving stat-driven approach to create a thoroughly immersive football world, Champ Man as it's affectionately known, has waved a wanton two fingers at the 3D revolution and all the latest graphical frippery, to deliver solid gameplay and what many regard as the PC's supreme managerial test.

Now, Championship Manager 3, the latest incarnation of the footballing phenomenon, is ready to make its debut.

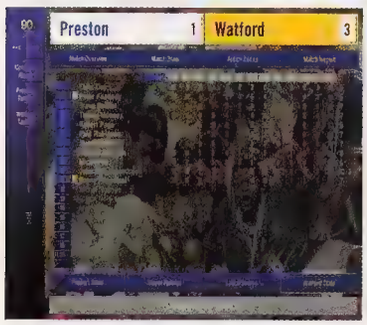
When we spoke to them last year, Paul and Oliver Collyer the brotherly brains behind Sports Interactive's bestselling series, promised a total rewrite of the game – drawing on the experience and feedback they'd received from the existing Champ Man fan base. On this latest showing, those hordes of armchair supremos certainly won't be disappointed at the result.

The first major development is the ability to run a total of 16 leagues simultaneously (depending on your system's performance) with all the major European, Scandinavian and North and South American leagues represented, plus the ability to slot in future add-on league releases as required. Not only does this give you more teams and players to choose from, but it significantly raises the international scope of the game as you can now swap jobs and move between countries with impunity, which really promotes the sense of being involved in a living, breathing footballing world.

One of the series' strengths has always been its authenticity and Champ Man 3 is definitely the most detailed version yet. Every domestic and international league and cup competition, plus special events such as the World and Confederation cups, are included and covered in frightening and sometimes almost overwhelming detail. Interested in the inner workings of the Spanish second division? Looking for a bargain basement buy in the Vauxhall Conference? Or searching for that special forward from the African Nations Cup? Champ Man 3 covers them all and a lot more besides. In fact, the level of depth throughout is such that even the most hardened soccer addict will probably be satiated to the point of bursting by the stat-heavy, ultra-comprehensive nature of the beast.

Yet probably the most significant improvement is the new match engine which, while retaining the radio-style commentary of its predecessor, now plays out every single pass, tackle and shot in real-time for every game. Players can be given detailed instructions for each match and these interact with their natural abilities to produce a much more realistic match result. The level of feedback and response has also improved, with even more detailed match reports and statistical analysis, plus the addition of a series of monthly and yearly awards to help you judge both your players' prowess and your own managerial performance.

Tactically, Champ Man 3 has also upped its standards and the introduction of the new tactics editor makes designing and implementing



your chosen strategies a much more intriguing and rewarding task. All the standard formations are at your disposal, but using a simple grid system, means you can accurately design your own custom playing style – modifying it for when you're in possession or chasing the game and positioning players to beat the offside trap, make devastating midfield forays, or sit back and catch the opposition on the break.

One of the most crucial managerial tasks remains the buying and selling of players to assemble that perfect championship-winning squad.

In Champ Man 3, the players have also undergone a radical revision with up to 40 stats (compared with 25 in the previous version) now rating your star performers on every aspect of their game – from speed and acceleration, to positioning and reflexes, even the number of languages they speak. This is accurately reflected in the match sequence with fair players beating opponents, selfish centre forwards hogging the ball, and aggressive defenders weighing in with some scything challenges. A more modern scouting-style system has also been introduced to aid your search for fresh talent. This new facility makes it fairly easy to sort the potential bargains from the donkeys, which is an improvement over the cumbersome player search in Champ Man 2.

With an impressive pedigree and an already huge following, there's little doubt that Championship Manager 3 will be a rip-roaring success when it's released. Of course, with few graphical bells and whistles, a distinct lack of instant thrills, and a mass of statistical information to digest, it's not going to be everyone's cup of tea.

But with more stats, more players, more teams and a level of depth comparable with Marianas Trench, Champ Man 3 must become the weapon of choice for hardcore soccer fanatics looking for some serious long-term challenge.

THE PITCH: The biggest name in PC football gets bigger, better and badder

THE PROSPECTS: A sumptuous football spread and the ultimate soccer stat festival

DUE: 5 February

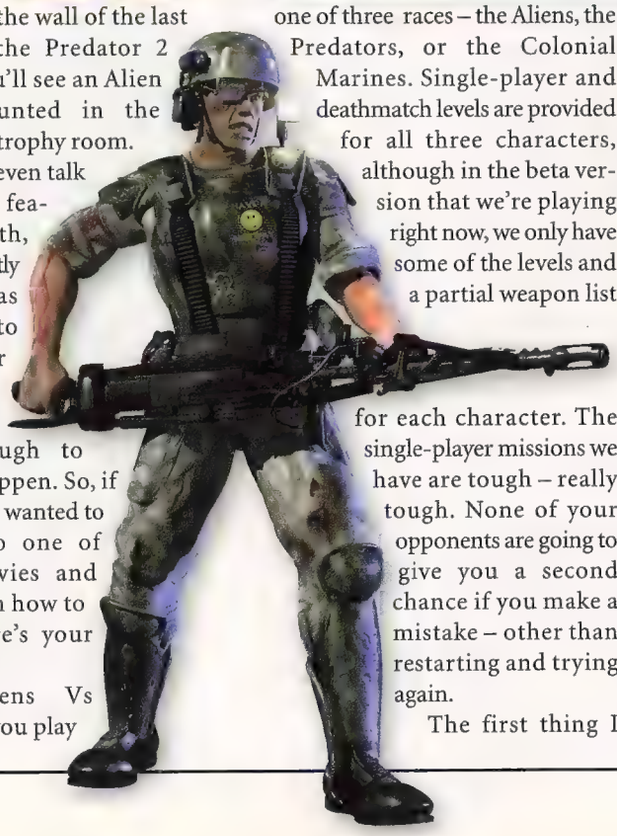
ACTION

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

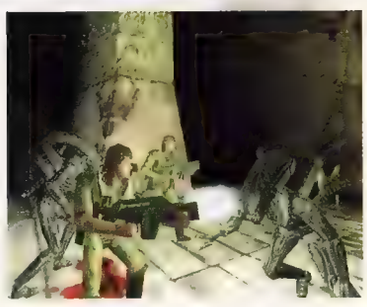
LABEL: Fox Interactive
DEVELOPER: Rebellion Developments

All the Alien and Predator movies had one thing in common – they featured extra terrestrial killing machines that you just couldn't wait to see more of.

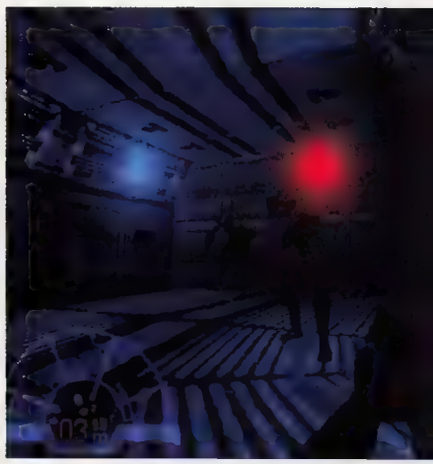
Now, who hasn't already thought about pitting the two alien races against each another to see who's the best? The concept of getting the Alien and the Predator races together for a little Celebrity Deathmatch is not a new one, but that's just what you get to do in Aliens Vs Predator. There's a very cool comic book series based on the subject, and if you look very closely on the wall of the last scene in the Predator 2 movie, you'll see an Alien skull mounted in the Predators' trophy room. There was even talk of a movie featuring both, but apparently no one was willing to loosen their grip on the licences long enough to make it happen. So, if you've ever wanted to jump into one of these movies and show them how to do it, here's your chance.

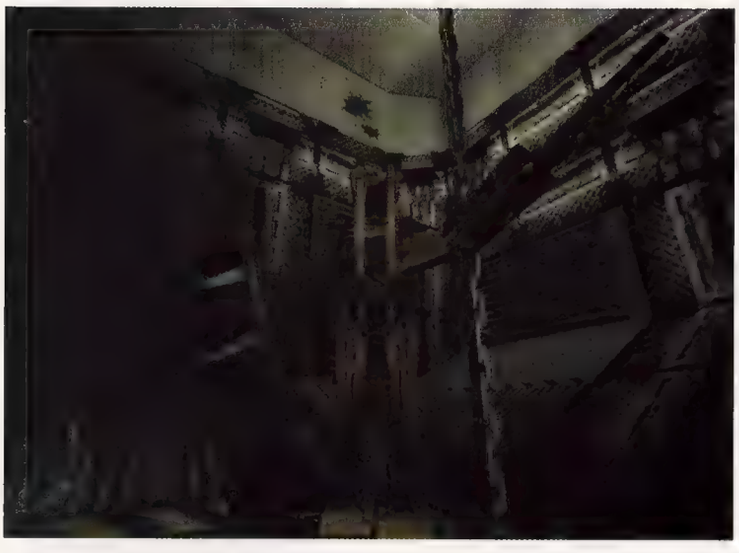


In Aliens Vs Predator, you play one of three races – the Aliens, the Predators, or the Colonial Marines. Single-player and deathmatch levels are provided for all three characters, although in the beta version that we're playing right now, we only have some of the levels and a partial weapon list for each character. The single-player missions we have are tough – really tough. None of your opponents are going to give you a second chance if you make a mistake – other than restarting and trying again.



The first thing I noticed about the level design in Aliens Vs Predator is that everything is really dark. Remember in Alien, the movie, how the corridors of the Nostromo felt like anything could be hiding anywhere? Well, thanks to the minimalist lighting, creative use of textures and the use of ambient noises, Aliens Vs Predator is positively creepy. Some of our favourite movie locations are here, like the derelict ship from Alien and the penal colony from Alien 3. There are military installations from the Predator to





hunt in, and your standard 'Let's get the hell out of here' levels for the marines. The deathmatch levels also show promise with lots of places for crossfire, stalking and hiding.

The most striking feature of this game is the extreme power of all the contestants. It's almost redundant to talk about the lethality of any of the three. What it boils down to is that you'll get no second chances here. Aliens descend upon you with blinding speed, and the Predators' shoulder cannon will blow a hole in you so big you'll need a manhole cover to plug it.

Just so you don't think that the marines are fodder in this one, remember Vasquez's smart gun? You know, the big cannon mounted on a swing arm? That baby will cut through an enemy race like a sword through cheese. Just be sure that acid doesn't spatter on you!

The races seem oddly balanced, despite the very different abilities and extreme power of each. In my play testing, no one seemed to have a huge advantage over the next. Just the deathmatch potential alone makes this a game to keep on your motion tracker.

Aliens Vs Predator shows plenty of promise, even at this stage of its development. With a little spit and polish and a gamma control to fix the places where it's just too dark, this game could be one of our all-time favourites.

● See for yourself. Don't just take my word for it – play the Aliens Vs Predator Marine demo on this month's CD!

THE PITCH: Two classic foes head-to-head. A tough game that cleverly employs the mood and atmosphere from the original films.

THE PROSPECTS: If the finished version lives up to what the Beta promises, this could make gameplay as tense as the films

DUE: March

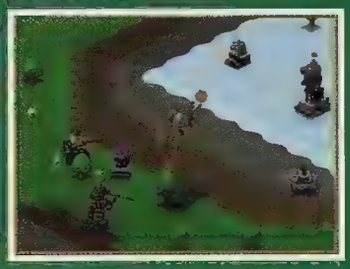
TOP 10 NOW PLAYING

Here are the top ten titles played by our readers. To have your vote counted, fill in the form on page 125.

Playlist position	Title	Label	Game Type
1	Tomb Raider III	Eidos	Action
2	The Settlers III	Blue Byte	Strat/War
3	Colin McRae Rally	Codemasters	Simulation
4	Grand Theft Auto	Take 2	Action
5	Flight Simulator 98	Microsoft	Simulation
6	Grim Fandango	LucasArts	Adv/RPG
7	Unreal	GT Interactive	Action
8	FIFA 99	EA Sports	Sports
9	Command & Conquer: Red Alert	Westwood	Strat/War
10	Half-Life	Sierra	Action

SIGHTINGS

Tanktics
Gremlin/DMA
Due: Spring



Quirky is possibly the word for this strategy game from DMA, creator of Grand Theft Auto. The object is to build tanks out of whatever you can find, from metal to sheep, and then send them against the enemy. There are different time periods: Stone Age, where tanks are made of granite and move ponderously; Medieval, where they're constructed like castles, complete with flags; Modern, where they're metallic and powerful, and Future, where they can hover and boast an amazing range of weapons. Oh, and you can set fire to the sheep...

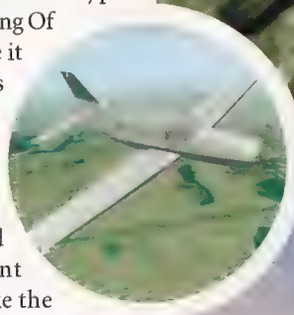
MiG Alley
Empire/Rowan
Due: Spring

From Rowan Software, developer of Flying Corps, comes MiG Alley, set in the Korean War. As Supreme Allied Air Commander you have five crack US aircraft squadrons to send against the Russian MiG squadrons, which have just joined forces with the Chinese and North Koreans. Using a new engine, improved AI and enhanced graphics, the game promises to hurl you into the midst of jet-to-jet dogfights, with over 50 aircraft battling it out mid-air at any one time. Planes include the F86 Sabre, F84 Thunderjet, F80 Shooting Star, P51 Mustang and the MiG 15 and MiG 15 bis

SIMULATION

FLY!

PUBLISHER: Gathering Of Developers
DEVELOPER: Terminal Reality



It's always a bit tricky choosing to go up against the behemoth that is Microsoft's Flight Simulator in the civilian flight sim stakes. But Fly! from much-hyped new publisher Gathering Of Developers looks like it could do just what its name suggests.

Hopping into the cockpit of the alpha version's Cessna 172R, we were chuffed to find that the instrument panel looked just like the real thing. Where other sims often rearrange or compress instruments for playability reasons, Fly! attempts to create an exact replica of the real plane's cockpit. Although this necessitates scrolling around the screen to see the entire instrument panel, it's well worth the trade-off.

The cockpit simulation doesn't stop with the main panel, either. Floor and overhead panels are modelled as well, and virtually every switch, dial and control in the real plane is accessible by simply clicking on it.

A real bonus of this sim is that it will accommodate the novice pilot, too. For instance, while you can start up the engine by going through the proper checklist procedure, you can also bypass the details and just hit 'E' to perform all the necessary steps.

This type of optional assistance should come into play throughout the sim. For instance, Fly! has fully interactive air traffic control. If you activate the radio, a menu will pop up with up to 10 appropriate messages for your current situation. A wide variety of realism settings enable you to tailor the complexity of the sim for beginners or licensed pilots alike.

Even at this early stage, the flight modelling is extremely impressive. Flying the Cessna, its responses and performance seemed right on the mark. Pushing into more suicidal regimes, we were able to loop, spin, and even snap-roll the plane. Control response felt natural, being neither overly stable nor overly sensitive.

Landing gear strut movement is modelled, too. This not only provides nice, subtle movements as you brake on the ground, but also adds to the realism of landing, where bouncing off the runway can be a real problem for beginner pilots.

You won't be alone in the skies. Both general aviation and airliner traffic will be modelled, giving you the chance to practise entering a crowded pattern. The sim will generate real flight plans for each plane. You'll hear AI planes calling for clearance, and you can even follow them from take-off to their final destination. (And yes, Kamikaze Boy, collisions will be implemented.) In addition, the Flight Party multiplayer mode will let you fly with up to seven others over the Internet. The sim's 'Live Mike' technology will let you communicate with other players via voice.

Terminal Reality knows it's going to have to make a good impression with Fly! if it's going to stand any hope against Microsoft's hugely successful Flight Sim series, but from what we've seen here, Microsoft's upcoming – and raved about – Flight Simulator 2000 is in for some stiff competition.

THE PITCH: A flight simulator to suit the professional pilot and the novice alike

THE PROSPECTS: A worthy challenger to the next incarnation of MS Flight Simulator

DUE: Late spring

SPORT

CRICKET WORLD CUP 99

PUBLISHER: EA Sports
DEVELOPER: Creative Assembly

Even a brave showing in the final two Tests couldn't save the Ashes this winter, but English cricket followers are by definition eternal optimists and with a World Cup looming large this summer, we'll be wanting to salvage some pride and hoping (like Les Blues), that home advantage counts for something after all.

Still, if we do suddenly switch on the collapsotron™ or embark on our usual cunning ploy of starting to field like a bunch of small girls, then at least England fans will be able to seek some solace from Cricket World Cup 99, EA Sports' spanking new playable cricket outing which promises more gigantic six hits than the combined England spinners.

Developed by Sussex-based Creative Assembly, the early indications are that Cricket World Cup 99 is going to be a visual treat, with a 3D accelerated engine which incorporates TV-style camera angles, as well as unique batsman and stump-cam views. Pitch, weather and playing conditions have all been recreated via an accurate physics model and England one-day stars Adam and Ben Hollioake have motion-captured over 600 unique moves for the player animations, with Aussie run-glutton Ricky Ponting also recently joining the team.

Out in the middle, a choice of arcade and simulation modes should ensure a good balance between depth and playability and the developers are also promising considerable tactical options with detailed team management, strategy and field settings faithfully recreating the cerebral side of the game. Budding cricket skippers will certainly be in for a challenge as the computer teams' AI has also been specially developed to respond to different match situations, going for the big hits during tight run chases, or setting aggressive fields to defend a total at the end of an innings. You'll be able to stroke boundaries or bowl bouncers on hallowed wickets like Old Trafford, the Oval and Lord's and commentary from cricket gurus David Gower and Richie Benaud plus ambient, context sensitive sound effects should ensure a suitably charged World Cup atmosphere.

The official licence also means authentic team line-ups and with in-depth statistics supplied by PA Sports, Cricket World Cup 99 should certainly play with a straight bat.

Perhaps the most interesting angle is that the game will feature live online updates during the tournament, faithfully recreating the playing conditions and team selections for each match – so if England play on a raging turner in their opening fixture and Mike Atherton crocks his back, this will be accurately reflected in your virtual game.

EA Sports will also be hosting a series of virtual World Cup events on Wireplay, so there'll be a chance to prove your cricketing prowess against the best of the online world.

THE PITCH: The best playable cricket game from the leader in PC sports conversions

THE PROSPECTS: A mouth-watering prospect for PC cricket fans. Looks first class and if the gameplay gels properly this should lift the trophy

DUE: Summer

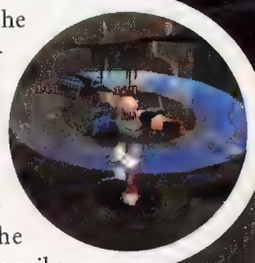
ADVENTURE & ROLEPLAYING

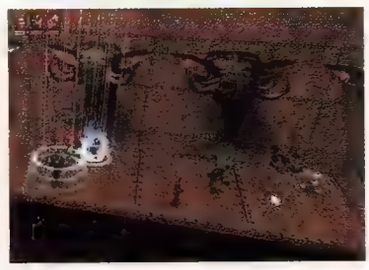
SILVER

LABEL: Infogrames
DEVELOPER: Tribe

Why it has taken so long I don't know but, finally, a western games company has realised that 'Japanese'-style roleplaying/adventure games are not the sole preserve of the Japanese. Hard on the heels of Final Fantasy VII comes Silver, a classic tale of good versus evil that has every intention of showing the Far East that anything it can do, Infogrames can do better.

In a mythical land, the tyrannical Emperor has decreed that all women of child-bearing age are to be brought to him and so he dispatches his evil minion, Lord Fuce (Booo!), to carry out his orders. Failure to comply with the Emperor's demand is a treasonable punishment for the folk of the land, and this, as Fuce happily tells anyone within earshot, is instant death. Carrying out his jolly task, Lord Fuce happens upon a woman named Jennifer, washing clothes at the riverside and she too is dispatched to the cargo hold of the Imperial galleon for transport. Unfortunately – for all evil parties concerned – Jennifer is the wife of David, and David is not about to let anyone run off with his beloved without a ruck. And if that means taking on the Empire... well, so be it.



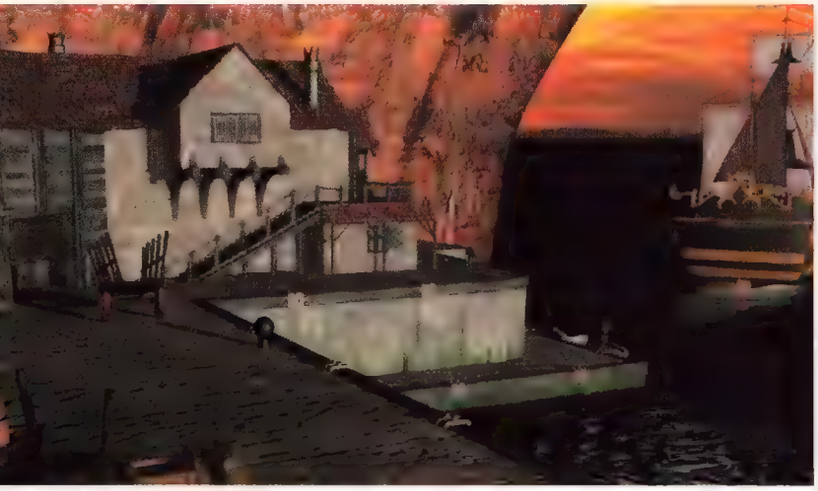


So starts the epic Silver saga, as David, aided by his Grandfather, sets out to find and release his wife from the Emperor's vile clutches...

The large production team behind Silver, which has been three years in development, has worked hard on every aspect of the game – from characterisation to orchestration in an effort to create a uniquely enjoyable and immersive product. In doing so they have managed to create a 3D engine which, even though it doesn't require 3D acceleration, can still produce textures, transparencies and all manner of special effects smoothly on any machine as low as a P166 with only 32Mb of RAM.

There are seven lands within the world of Silver, over 200 pre-rendered locations and a wealth of depth and detail to imbue the game with an original and atmospheric feel. Within this world, populated by countless imps, monsters, townsfolk and travellers there are over 50 diverse and distinctive characters to be encountered who will either help or hinder the efforts of David, and five player-characters you can control.

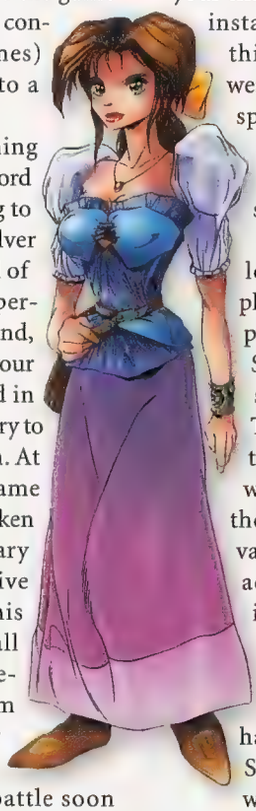
But to stand a chance of achieving



his goal, David will have to master the separate disciplines of sword, bow, bombs and magic.

The combat system of Silver has attempted to integrate fighting into the general structure of the game rather than (as in many console roleplaying games) moving the action into a separate sub-screen. Also, instead of assigning control of actions like sword thrusts and spellcasting to joypad or keyboard, Silver uses a unusual method of mouse movements to perform any given attack and, as the game progresses, your characters are coached in the various skills necessary to master a given weapon. At the beginning of the game for instance, David is taken through the rudimentary movements for effective sword play by his Grandfather, and all require deft mouse-thrusts to perform correctly. It makes for some fairly intense and frantic action when battle soon ensues and in some ways the precise mouse skills needed are reminiscent of a classic beat 'em-up in terms of handling.

One often-overlooked area of many roleplaying games is a descent inventory system that is clear and quick to use without having to thread through a myriad of banal sub-screens: in that respect, Silver's system is the best we have seen for some time. Only your hero's health and magic power will ever appear automatically upon the screen, but a single right mouse-click brings up a small, circular inventory above your character from which can instantly be accessed anything from his various weapon collections to his spells and statistics. All without ever losing sight of the game screen.



From the brief, hour-long demo we have played (that's about three per cent of the game), Silver is shaping up into something quite special. The backdrops and locations have been rendered with great style and detail, the characters are full of variety, and the plot and action moves swiftly, interspersed with the odd nice comic moment.

Infogrames may have named the game Silver, but with all the work it has put into it there is no question it's going for gold.

THE PITCH: An epic, time-old struggle of good versus evil, set against a vast and colourful world

THE PROSPECTS: With the seminal Final Fantasy VII proving itself a hit on the PC, who's to say that a homegrown product can't do the same?

DUE: March

LANDER CRAFT ARE RESPONSIVE, SHARP AND BUILT FOR SURVIVAL.
LANDER
HANDLE WITH CARE
PSYGNOSIS
PC CD ROM
DVD ROM
DOLBY DIGITAL
Lander, Psygnosis and the Psygnosis logo are ™ or ® and © 1998-8 of Psygnosis Ltd. All rights reserved.
Dolby and the DD are trademarks of Dolby Laboratories Licensing Corporation.

8 HOURS BEHIND

America is a another country. Strange stuff happens there. And some quite important stuff, too. To keep you in the loop – here's the view from 8 Hours Behind

All quoted from our US sister publication CGW

Jeff Green on turning 37 The clearest, and most depressing sign of my rapidly approaching slide into cane-rattling, tapioca-pudding-eating senility is my exponentially declining game skills… Back in my glory days I could hold my own in a first-person shooter. My reflexes were good and my mind was sharp, enabling me to routinely kick booty in games such as Doom and Marathon. Gamers feared me. These days, well, it's all very sad

Trespasser An ugly mishmash of uncertain identity, Trespasser is crippled by ill-conceived ideas, a technically promising engine which totally screws up gameplay, and a plethora of horrendous glitches… With further problems too numerous to list, the brevity of the game (a mere eight levels) is most noteworthy

Jane's A-10 Warthog With the ugliest visage this side of the A-6 Intruder, and a seemingly endless string of pylons jutting from under its wings, the plane was quickly re-christened the 'Warthog' by pilots who flew her

Fly! When the Goliath you're taking on is Microsoft's Flight Simulator, you need all the weaponry you can pack. And with Fly!, developer Terminal Reality looks to be armed to the teeth

European Air War Sometimes, when everything comes together, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. European Air War is a perfect example

Fighter Pilot Throw in graphics more suited for a hard-core simulation and you've got a game that's like a TV dinner: not bad but very, very bland

Delta Force As close to the real thing as you can get

SiN It's sad that Ritual, the company behind Quake Mission Pack 1: The Scourge of Armagon, spent two years on SiN only to see it crippled by bugs that should have been caught in testing

Fallout 2 A dreary rehash of the original Fallout main plot… with subplots far more interesting than the main storyline

Grim Fandango Schafer has done a great job of creating a moody, noir mystery with a fantastic script. The artists at LucasArts also deserve much praise for their brilliant art direction demonstrated throughout the game

NHL 99 Is this the finest EA Sports NHL game today? Actually, yes

101 Airborne Unfortunately, 101 simply doesn't operate well as a game. For me, there's nothing worse than having to constantly reload a saved game in order to overcome some random occurrence which makes victory impossible

Sentinel Returns Despite 3D acceleration, the dark and eerie environs aren't terribly impressive

TRANSATLANTIC TOP 10

Here's the latest PC games chart from the US – official US chart data from PC Data

	Title	Genre	Label
1	Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2	Sports	Activision
2	Deer Hunter II 3D	Sports	Wizard Works
3	StarCraft Expansion: Brood Wars	Strat/War	Blizzard
4	Frogger	C&P	Hasbro Interactive
5	Microsoft Flight Simulator	Simulation	Microsoft
6	Barbie Riding Club	Action	Mattel
7	Barbie Photo Designer	C&P	Mattel
8	Half-Life	Action	Sierra
9	Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator	Simulation	Microsoft
10	Wheel Of Fortune	C&P	Hasbro Interactive

SIMULATION

PANZER ELITE

LABEL: Psygnosis
DEVELOPER: Wings Simulations

Previewing a game from early code is always dangerous. The designer notes promise seductive features not yet fleshed out, or even created. The code itself suffers from inevitable hardware conflicts, crashes, and commands that have out-distanced scant early documentation. Fortunately, Psygnosis' Panzer Elite has a rare mix of excitement and substance – even though it's barely alpha.

Earlier games in this genre, such as Interactive Magic's IPanzer '44 and SSI's Panzer Commander, can be criticised in terms of scope, graphics, realism and vehicle detail and capabilities. But Panzer Elite attacks these areas with the fervour.

Panzer Elite covers German/American battles from 1942 to 1945 on a platoon level. Theatres of operations include Tunisia, Sicily, Italy and France, and play varies from quick engagements, single actions and long or short campaigns – around 50 missions/campaigns in all. The designers have rectified the absence of an American campaign seen in Panzer Commander while simplifying command control.

Some gamers may lament the absence of those vicious Russian tanks and the quaint early Western Allied vehicles. But these are more than compensated for by depth – while leaving room for sequels.

The graphics are a head and shoulders above the competition. Forests are made of individual trees, and bushes can be blown away or rolled over – if your vehicle's treads and drive train are up to it. Similarly, buildings are distinctive to regions and are individually modelled. They, like walls, can be crashed into for cover and quick getaways – at the risk of vehicle damage. Terrain literally rolls, with tank commanders bouncing in the turret and the difference in terrain colours and textures make finding a hull-down position much easier.

Vehicle and combat graphics are modelled intricately and faithfully

to the originals. This authenticity becomes even more dramatic in the commander's buttoned-up cupola. The view is restricted, with slots giving no more than 30 per cent of the total screen.

In your tank, each crew member is represented and has varying qualities which affect performance. In the campaign game, you fuel vehicles from available reserves, pick a multitude of shells from your stockpile, and upgrade units with a myriad of options such as skirts, anti-aircraft machine guns, and advanced armour-piercing shells. If you have a good record, you can exchange older vehicles for better ones. And if your platoon is not performing well, you can even sack a tank's commander.

Platoon members can be ordered about with one hotkey while the commander can control movement through a super-imposed mouse tank. Of course, hotkeys will handle tank functions at the crew positions. Targets are selected with a click – to be fired upon by either the tank's gunner, another tank or the entire platoon.

Driving your vehicle seems simple, but requires thought. Tanks flip over when going up steep slopes at a bad angle and engines overheat when pushed too hard. Compasses are useless surrounded by so much metal, so commanders navigate by maps and landmarks. Platoons can be ordered to a particular point by a combination of a click and a hotkey and get there in the usual column, line, echelon and v-shaped formations. The physics of manoeuvrability over the battlefield is fascinating. The Tiger tank is often thought to be clumsy yet its wider tracks made it more manoeuverable than a Sherman on soft terrain.

Combat requires a keen eye. Crew members may spot the enemy, but you must still make observations without the benefit of visual cues. As you'd expect in a physics-based tank sim, success requires that you manoeuvre for side and rear shots at the enemy, and fire from a stationary position. In a Tiger, the temptation is simply to sit there and bang away but, sooner or later, an enemy will get in a good shot at you, so hull-down positions are important. When things get too hot, smoke shells and dischargers can provide cover. The vehicles are modelled to sustain many different kinds of mechanical and battle damage, some of which can be repaired by the crew.

The missions range from recon and assault to static defence and 'fire brigade' responses. Campaigns can be long, medium or short in duration, and they sport the usual crew ability improvements, supply increases and decorations for good performance. While you can call in off-board artillery, your main support comes from independent units, who seem to fight well. I watched a squad of my own infantry take out an enemy, which speaks volumes for the AI. The computer opponent, even at this early stage of the code, is no fool. But the ultimate opponent to play is another human, and Panzer Elite plans to support LAN, IPX, Internet, and null-modem play.

But, even if all the designers plan to do is implemented, some questions about Panzer Elite arise. Why, for example, is there no provision for air attacks, the bane of German crews in Normandy? And why is there no bail-out command, leaving dooming crews awaiting their fate in a badly disabled tank?

However, Panzer Elite holds every promise for thrilling gamers – even to those not usually attracted to WWII tank battles.

THE PITCH: Tank sim promising high-class graphics, authenticity and ease of use

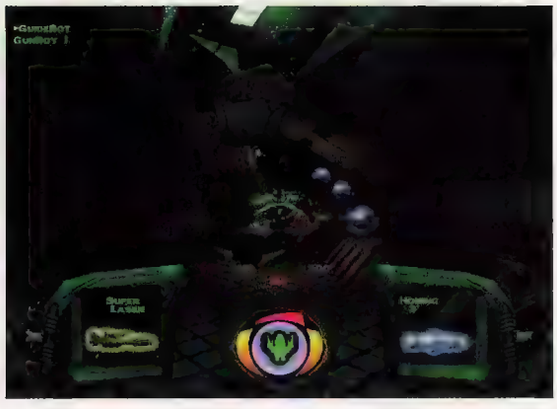
THE PROSPECTS: A sure-fire hit for even non-tank battle enthusiasts

DUE: 26 March

ACTION

DESCENT 3

LABEL: Interplay
DEVELOPER: Outrage Entertainment



The original Descent destroyed precedents set by other first-person shooters of its time. It plunged the player into a fully 3D world of twisting mines and mysterious caverns instead of the 2.5D worlds of Doom and its clones. Never before had players experienced the vertigo of the game's six degrees of freedom – nor had their computerised opponents shown such intelligence in attempting to ensure their destruction.

That was four years ago, however, and Descent has grown somewhat long in the tooth. Its sequel added new weapons and opponents, but little else. Last year's Forsaken, while faithfully cloning Descent's gameplay, raised the ante with gorgeous, pyrotechnic graphics and mission structures beyond Descent's repetitive 'blow up the main reactor, then get out' scenario.

But it was an updated Descent that fans really wanted, not just a console port with a picture of a nude woman on the box – and developer Outrage seems set to deliver just that.

Gamers put off by the use of the Descent name in the space-shooter Descent: Freespace can rest assured that Descent 3 is the real goods. Once again, we're plunged into the confines of underground chambers and hallways, with relentless robots tracking our every move.

Outrage has obviously acknowledged Forsaken with Descent 3. Players must now accomplish varied goals beyond 'find the key and exit'. Along with its new mission structure, Descent 3 has been updated with a graphics engine (known as 'Fusion') that puts all of its predecessors to shame. Descent 3's levels are rich with dynamic lighting and environmental effects (like smoke and rain) that run smoothly on even mid-line machines. It also supports action outside of the mines, although only a sample of this was in the build we played. This new power has its costs, though – Descent 3 requires 3D hardware acceleration

The build we played provided just a taste of the full game, but it's enough to see that the vertigo-inducing action has changed very little. The player still pilots a small craft that has complete freedom of movement to explore the levels. Descent fans will be right at home with the controls, but newer players will definitely experience a learning curve steeper than that of other first-person shooters. Fortunately, the game has an admirable key-configuration utility that will have newcomers zipping through the levels in no time.

Along with your craft – one of several that will be included in the full game – you're provided with a variety of death-dealing devices, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. Naturally, the ammo and energy required is also scattered about, or left behind by destroyed opponents. Your old friend, the GuideBot, will also make an encore.

Multiplayer brings Descent 3 to an entirely new level. Internet play is provided through Outrage's Parallax Online (PXO) server. Anyone who was unimpressed as a result of Descent: Freespace's lacklustre Internet performance will be pleasantly surprised. Even with mediocre pings on 28.8 modems, Descent 3 played smoothly, exhibiting a minimum of warping and lag. Games are extremely easy to set up and play, allowing dynamic joining and exiting. Multiplayer gameplay, whether it be a capture-the-flag match or straight Anarchy, is incredibly fast and furious. Descent 3 also takes the extra step of providing detailed statistics on each player.

Descent 3, while adding little to its genre that Forsaken did not, does everything with a panache and polish not seen in the games before it.

THE PITCH: The original concept behind Descent brought bang up to date

THE PROSPECTS: Refined missions and return to core concept should win hearts among the Descent faithful

DUE: April

SIMULATION

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 99

LABEL: Europress
DEVELOPER: Actualize

The advent of Force Feedback steering wheels has given a whole new lease of life to racing games, and few experiences can compare with chucking a high performance motor through the mud and dirt of a serious rally circuit. Until now, Colin McRae's Rally has been pretty much the undisputed champ on the PC rallying scene, but that could all be about to change with the dawn of Rally Championship 99 from Europress.

The fifth incarnation of the best-selling series (on this initial showing), Rally 99 certainly has the credentials to give Mr McRae a run for his money. A sumptuous game engine combines speed and realism to deliver some very lush visuals which are all based on actual OS maps and photos of the 36 rally courses on offer. There's a wealth of highly detailed 2WD and 4WD motors from 20 top rally teams to tear up the countryside with Each has a sophisticated physics model which takes into account factors like tumbling, collision and jumping to deliver advanced damage routines.

There's plenty of quality cockpit and co-pilot views to get the best angle on the action and you'll even find authentic dashboards and windscreen wipers to clear water and mud splashes.

Europress is also promising comprehensive multiplayer options through both LAN and the Internet, and Martin Rowe, winner of the 1998 British Rally Championship, is also fine-tuning the driving and car-modelling physics, which should certainly add a seal of authenticity to this already impressive looking title.

THE PITCH: The best looking and most immersive rally experience ever

THE PROSPECTS: It's going to take some hard driving to knock Mr McRae off top slot, but Rally 99 certainly has the potential

DUE: Spring

rollcage
PSYGNOSIS
PC CD ROM
PlayStation
and "PlayStation" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. © 1998-9 Psygnosis Ltd/Attention To Detail. Developed by Attention To Detail. Rollcage, Psygnosis and the Psygnosis Logo are ™ or ® of Psygnosis Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

ACTION

MORTYR

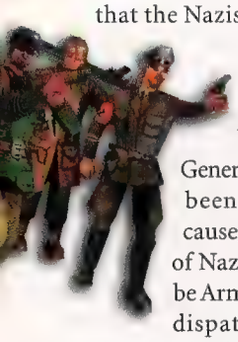
LABEL: Interactive Magic
DEVELOPER: Mirage

Before Quake there was Doom, and before Doom there was Wolfenstein 3D, the grand-daddy of all 3D shooters. What made the game so attractive – and controversial – was the fact that, rather than blasting demons, cyborgs or aliens, your targets were Nazi stormtroopers and SS guards – making it score well-low on the healing old Euro-wounds-ometer.

Wolfenstein is now hopelessly dated compared with today's 3D shooters. The joy of blowing away Hitler in his battle armour has been superseded by battles with cyberdemons, which, let's face it, isn't quite the same.

However, Jerry's in for another pasting in a completely new game from Mirage. Based on the company's own proprietary game engine, Mortyr is an altogether more thoughtful game than Wolfenstein, being based as it is on an alternate history, sci-fi plot.

The game starts in December 2093, almost 150 years after the Germans won World War II. Although German rule is unquestionable, the strange and violent storms that are wreaking havoc across Earth are the subject of great concern. General Jurgen Mortyr, the officer in charge of the Advanced Weapons Project, believes the storms are being caused by temporal anomalies. By following his suspicions, he uncovers evidence that the Nazis have used a time-travel device to go back and change the outcome of World War II. While General Mortyr has always been loyal to the Nazi cause, he realises the cost of Nazi victory is likely to be Armageddon, and so he dispatches his son, Sebastian, back to 1944 to find the machine's inventor *before* he invents it.



The 20-level game takes place over two time periods, with assorted weapons and gizmos, such as night-vision goggles, jetpacks and silencers, and numerous Germanic baddies to shoot. The D3D-compatible game engine delivers all the usual effects – ambient lighting, reflections and so on. The enemies are pretty smart, too, and not only use the scenery as cover if you start shooting, but will also pick up health and ammo.

Multiplayer is also well catered for, with an objective co-operative mode as well as deathmatch and capture-the-flag options.

Overall, Mortyr seems pretty tempting. And it should certainly cure those Euro blues.

THE PITCH: Wolfenstein with knobs on

THE PROSPECTS: The *Victor and Eagle* reader in us prefers wasting Nazi stormtroopers than aliens or demons, so it should do just fine

DUE: March

CHARTS

The PC Gaming World Charts are compiled from official weekly sales data gathered by ChartTrack/ELSPA

TOP 40 PC GAMES

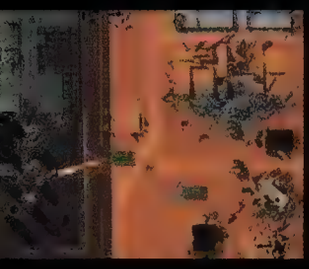
This week	Last month	Title Publisher	Weeks on chart	Highest position
1	NE	**Baldur's Gate/Interplay**	1	1
2	(1)	Tomb Raider III/Eidos	7	1
3	(2)	Half-Life/Sierra	7	2
4	NE	FIFA 99/EA Sports	6	2
5	(3)	Combat Flight Simulator/Microsoft	9	1
6	NE	Gangsters: Organised Crime/Eidos	6	5
7	RE	Monopoly Star Wars/Hasbro	21	7
8	(7)	Colin McRae Rally/Codemasters	14	1
9	(11)	Age Of Empires/Microsoft	64	2
10	(8)	Titanic – Adventure Out Of Time/Europress	31	3
11	(13)	Flight Simulator '98/Microsoft	65	1
12	(5)	The Settlers III/Blue Byte	8	4
13	(21)	SiN/Activision	5	4
14	NE	Star Wars: Rogue Squadron/LucasArts	6	9
15	(28)	Civilization II/MicroProse	134	1
16	(14)	Grand Theft Auto/Take 2	57	2
17	(4)	Populous – The Beginning/Bullfrog	8	3
18	NE	Barbie: Riding Club Mattel Media	6	5
19	(6)	FA Prem League F/ball Manager 99/EA Sports	13	1
20	RE	Dune 2000/Westwood Studios	10	1
21	(12)	Grim Fandango/LucasArts	11	1
22	(31)	Quake II/Activision	55	1
23	(10)	World Cup 98/EA Sports	33	1
24	(9)	Age Of Empires: The Rise Of Rome/Microsoft	9	2
25	(15)	Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines/Eidos	29	1
26	NE	Lego Island/Lego Media	2	25
27	(25)	Championship Manager 2 97/98/Eidos	61	1
28	NE	Thief: The Dark Project/Eidos	5	28
29	(23)	Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six/Red Storm	13	3
30	(34)	X-Files: The Game/Fox Interactive	22	1
31	(20)	Premier Manager 98/Gremlin	27	2
32	(24)	Tomb Raider II/Eidos	57	1
33	NE	Falcon 4.0/MicroProse	4	25
34	(16)	Carmageddon II: Carpocalypse Now/SCi	10	2
35	RE	Sabrina The Teenage Witch/Knowledge Adv	4	28
36	(18)	Caesar III/Sierra	12	2
37	RE	Unreal/GT Interactive	25	1
38	(19)	Railroad Tycoon II/Take 2	10	5
39	(35)	Tiger Woods 99/EA Sports	13	16
40	(36)	Riven/Red Orb	56	3

NE – New Entry. RE – Re Entry

BUDGET/RE-RELEASES TOP 20

1	Tomb Raider/Unfinished Business	Premier Collection
2	The Biggest Names, The Biggest Games	Electronic Arts
3	Network Q RAC Rally Championship	Q Range
4	Worms	Sold Out
5	Theme Park	EA Classics
6	F1 Grand Prix 2	PowerPlus
7	SimCity 2000 SE	EA Classics
8	The Full Wormage	MicroProse
9	Dungeon Keeper Gold	EA Classics
10	Warcraft	Sold Out
11	The Settlers II: Vini, Vidi, Vici	Blue Byte Classics
12	Cannon Fodder 2	Sold Out
13	Duke Nukem 3D	Premier Collection
14	Worms/Civilization Dual Pack	Q Range
15	Carmageddon	Replay
16	Earthworm Jim	Black Market
17	Theme Hospital	EA Classics
18	F1 Racing Simulation	Ubi Soft Classique
19	Total Annihilation	Replay
20	Cannon Fodder	Sold Out
Simulations Top 3		
1	Combat Flight Simulator	Microsoft
2	Colin McRae Rally	Codemasters
3	Flight Simulator 98	Microsoft
Action Top 3		
1	Tomb Raider III	Eidos
2	Half-Life	Sierra
3	SiN	Activision
Strategy and Wargaming Top 3		
1	Gangsters: Organised Crime	Eidos
2	Age Of Empires	Microsoft
3	The Settlers III	Blue Byte
Sports Top 3		
1	FIFA 99	EA Sports
2	FA Premier League Football Manager 99	EA Sports
3	World Cup 98	EA Sports
Adventure and Roleplaying Top 3		
1	Baldur's Gate	Interplay
2	Titanic – An Adventure Out Of Time	Europress
3	Grim Fandango	LucasArts
Multimedia Top 5		
1	South Park Theme & Screensaver	Telstar Electronic Studios
2	Geoff Hamilton's 3D Garden Designer	GSP
3	IBM Voice 98 Home	IBM
4	Star Wars: Behind The Magic	LucasArts
5	Art Attack	Europress

ALL IS HELL ON THE RUSSIAN FRONT

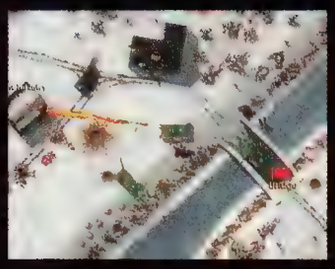


Four gruelling years of war in terrifying weather conditions. There are no rules, you are the frontline Commander. Take your troops from Moscow's Red Square to the fall of Berlin.

Choose from rocket artillery, off-map artillery, flame-throwers and 780 different vehicles. With over 300 squad types and 60 different kinds of soldier. You have everything you need to succeed - are you up to the challenge?

The battlefields are true but the outcome is unwritten.

Will history repeat itself?



CLOSE COMBAT III THE RUSSIAN FRONT

Experience Close Combat III: The Russian Front for yourself

Fast forward your PC.
Enrich the experience with Windows® 98

msn Gaming ZONE
PLAY IT FREE ON ZONE.COM/UK/

Microsoft®
where do you want to go today?®

Visit www.microsoft.com/uk/gameszone/

Available from these leading National Retailers:
Electronic Boutique, Game, HMV, John Lewis Partnership, PCWorld, Staples, Tempo and Virgin.

Microsoft and Where do you want to go today? are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the US and/or other countries.

IF YOU GO D WOODS

NFK

...hhh! Breathe in that clean, crisp woodland air and ask yourself is there anything better than a fun day out in the country. Just you, an arsenal of serious firepower and all those cute, little furry animals. Yes siree,we're going hunting.

NFK takes the noble sport of 'country pursuits' to an all-new, muck 'n' bullets, gameplay level. It's so totally ballistic it'll bring out the animal in you.

But you'll need a whole rucksack-full of stealth and cunning before you start sneakin' 'n' squelchin' through the mud and heather to blow-away some dear little deer!

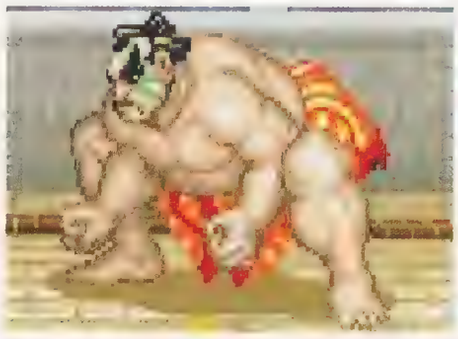
And then of course, there are the other kind of woodland chums. The ones with the lizard skin and big teeth. The ones you need that grenade launcher for. The scary Jurassic kind!

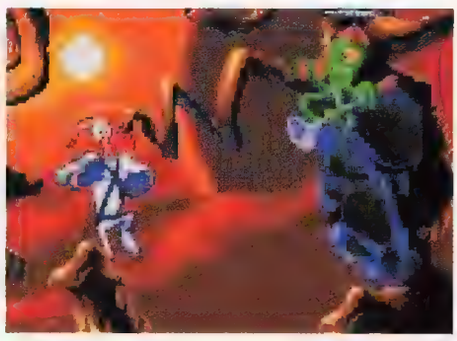
Wild game! You can say that again.

AVAILABLE FROM MOST GOOD RETAILERS AND MAIL ORDER HOUSES

OWN TO THE AGAIN...

THE GREAT





Still yearn for the days of Space Invaders, Mario and Donkey Kong? Well, wipe that tear away, for you can now relive those childhood gaming memories, with a bit of emulation

Your average PC is a very powerful machine in its own right, and yet, given the right software, it can also be completely schizophrenic. Looking back, you can trace the PC's identity crisis to the start of 1997, when the less than imaginatively titled program MAME appeared on the Internet. This Multi Arcade Machine Emulator was a tiny program, by Nicola Somalia, which mimicked the hardware of a small number of ancient and basic arcade machines. The program could be downloaded from the Internet and persuaded to run the arcade games (ROM images) of yesteryear, which also began to trickle onto the scene at that time.

Incredibly, gaming enthusiasts could now usher back nostalgic memories of their misspent youth, in the comfort of their own home. For the first time, arcade junkies could play the actual games they had spent years pumping so many 10p's into. For the obsessed games freak, there was no longer the need to go to the expense of littering their houses with arcade cabinets and cumbersome PCBs. For the more casual gamers, a mixture of curiosity and disbelief led to the program being downloaded and installed. Sure, the first batch of games was hardly cutting edge, and there were serious compatibility, glitching and sound problems to be addressed, but classics, such as Space Invaders, Galaxians, Mr Do, 1941, Bombjack, Carnival and Centipede were all given a new lease of life by this fledgling program.

However, not even MAME's authors could have predicted what would follow, for soon after, others took up the gauntlet, and coding these emulators soon became the 'in thing'. As the speed and power of home PCs increased exponentially, the challenge was two-fold. Initially, efforts concentrated on getting more sophisticated arcade hardware and games emulated, and, subsequently, quality and speed became the main goal. Programming teams set up in competition to each other, and sites dedicated to emulation began littering the Internet.

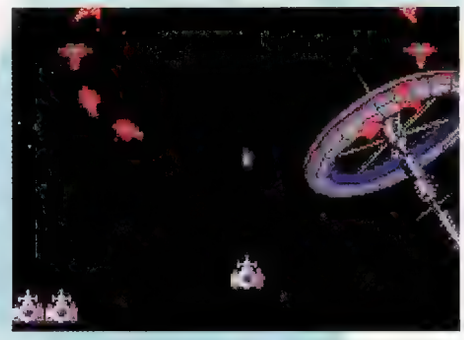
BUT IS IT LEGAL?

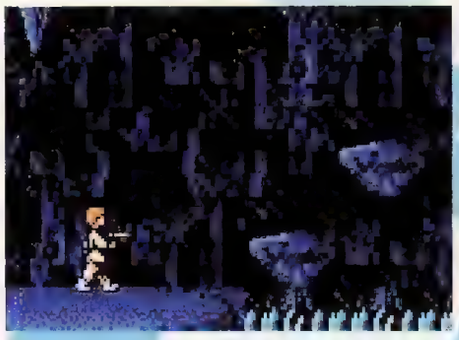
Today, the retro gaming scene has matured to such an extent that programmers have quickly surpassed perhaps even their own expectations, and emulated Spectrums, Commodores, Megadrives and Super Nintendos now to run previously commercially available ROMs. Internet sites stock these games and make them downloadable for 'backup' and 'experimentation purposes'. And it is these downloadable classics that have quite understandably attracted legal flack, in some cases from the owners of the original game copyrights. Purveyors of such emulators justify making them freely available by claiming that it is perfectly legal to download them if you own the original ROM (true enough). If you don't, they claim you can still stay within the law by deleting the file within 24 hours.

However, as with most legal issues, the situation is far from black and white. Take Amstrad, for example. It holds the copyright to the family of Spectrum computers, and has no problem with people using the ROM images from its hardware, which ceased production years ago. So, potential Spectrum emulator writers clear that hurdle without a problem, but fall at the next fence regarding the game images themselves.

Most – now defunct – Spectrum software companies jealously guard the copyright on their games, even though there is no way

PRETENDERS





The games of our lives: (left to right) Street Fighter 2: Earthworm Jim, Battlezone, Galaga, Starwars and Operation Wolf

they will ever make another penny for them. There are a few notable exceptions, however. Vortex Software, responsible for the classic Highway Encounter and its sequel Alien Encounter, actually encourages enthusiasts to copy, distribute and use its software. But, Vortex's stance is simply the exception that proves the rule.

In the real world, common sense seems to prevail, as a stroll into HMV proves. It stocks a CD, for about £10, which contains every commercially released Spectrum game – and it sells like hot cakes.

You could moralise *ad infinitum* regarding the copyright issue, but, as the ability to emulate newer and more commercially viable machines increases, so does the legal problem. Other companies, such as Nintendo, vigorously defend their software copyright, and the mere threat of legal action has been enough to close many a net-based Super Nintendo ROM site. Sega shares a similar stance with regard to Megadrive ROMs. Yet, to date, neither company has taken legal action in respect of enthusiasts breaching their copyrighted material, although with sites now offering Nintendo 64 ROMs and NeoGeo game images, a line must surely be drawn somewhere, and soon.

The legal issues have driven many coders underground, and this perhaps explains their reluctance to be interviewed. We emailed all of the leading emulator authors, asking for their comments on emulation and its legal implications. Many did not offer comment, preferring to hide behind the anonymity of coding names and pseudonyms.

Legal issues aside, there is little doubt that the scene will continue to flourish. It is hard to find a computer or console system that is not emulated to some degree or other, with the leading-edge authors now working on PlayStation and N64 emulators. Arcade purists are seeing emulators progressing with leaps and bounds through most companies' back catalogues, and with the added power of 3D accelerated hardware it is difficult to see where it will all end.

So, join us as we take a fond walk down memory lane, with a little help from the best emulators available.

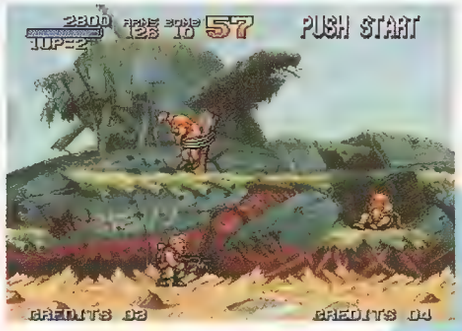
OH, WHAT A SITE

www.classicgaming.com/emunews/
The best starting place for EMU addicts. Updated regularly, sometimes three or four times a day, with all the latest emulation news and views. It contains a comprehensive links page, too, with connections to all major EMU-related sites.

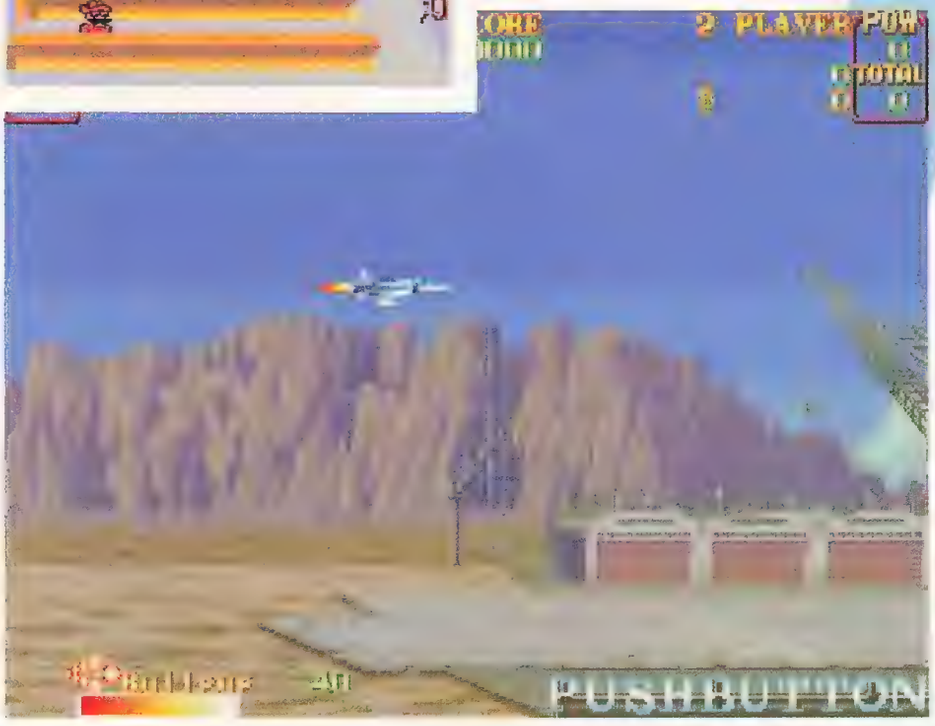
www.geocities.com/siliconvalley/bay/9932/
Homepage of the ZX32 Emulator, a freeware program giving near 100 per cent emulation of the ZX Spectrum family of computers, related software and hardware. Many retro-enthusiasts will have used Sir Clive Sinclair's baby in its hey-day and will revel in the ability to replay their games that helped shape the industry. Numerous sites throughout the Internet host game images, providing access to over 3,000 previously released titles. The machine was never as technically accomplished as its arch-rival, the Commodore 64, but still won a larger following and produced the more playable games. Additions to the original 48k model (the 128, +2 and +3) served to prolong the machine's life span, but did little to tackle its limited colour palette which caused garish, colour-clashing graphics on screen, nor its weedy internal beeper, which farted out attempts at music. None the less, it gave birth to some quite astonishing titles, which appeared to surpass the technical limitations of the machine.

Those delving into the history of the Spectrum would do well to seek out any of the following: Ultimate Play The Game (Sabre Wulfe, Jetman, Jetpac, Cookie, Psst); Vortex Software (Highway Encounter and Alien highway); Ocean Software (Chase HQ, Operation Wolf, Robocop).

Alien 8 (above): Ultimate's finest hour?
Tapper (below): Serve those drinks



Metal Slug: Rambo meets Caveman Ninja



UN Squadron: Fight for freedom in this politically incorrect shooter

www.codepot.com/uae/index.htm
Homepage of the UAE Emulator, a Windows-based Amiga 500 emulator that runs the vast majority of commercially available software, public domain programs and demos. Amiga emulation suffers from the same flaw as its original machines: there are numerous versions of the operating system available, and certain games will work only with specific versions of it. This has made Amiga emulation more of a fiddly chore than a pleasure, but those willing to persevere will no doubt fondly recall such classics as Pacmania, APB, Stunt Car Racer, and the Speedball and Starglider games.

Lazarus, the most respected and visited Amiga reference site on the Internet, was recently closed down under threat of legal action from Gateway – the new owner of the copyright to the Amiga brand name. This will either sound the final death knell for emulators of the machine, or will simply drive them further underground.

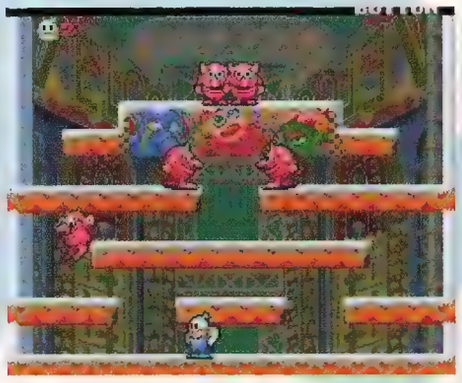
www.emulnews.com/kml-empire/index1.htm
Kgen, the leading Megadrive emulator. A superb option-filled program, giving near faultless reproduction of classic games. Kgen's only competition comes in the shape of Genecyst, written by Bloodlust Software, which is also responsible for the leading NES emulator, Nesticle. Both programs continue to go from strength to strength and serve to highlight what can be achieved with competition spurring on development. Although an 8-bit machine, the Megadrive produced some cracking games, which proved to be as technically accomplished as they were playable. Emulation brings with it the chance to finish games never previously completed, as options to save your progress provide even novice gamers with the chance to crack the more trying games. Such is the thoroughness of the emulation on show with both programs, that the difference is purely one of presentation and style. Both programs run classics such as Aladdin, Dune, the NBA series, Rainbow Island, and almost the entire back catalogue of the machine.

www.geocities.com/timesquare/lair/8706/mame32.html
This is where you will find the Windows

version of the grand-daddy of them all, M.A.M.E; now supporting nearly 1,000 classic arcade games. M.A.M.E has been ported to every platform known to man. The program is freeware, widely supported, and continues to go from strength to strength. It has come a long way since its inception and it's now difficult to recall an arcade favourite that hasn't been emulated by this program. A recent breakthrough includes the addition of Neo-geo games, though hardened arcade addicts will get most kicks from revisiting early gems, such as Bombjack, Commando, Mr Do, Galaga, Galaxians, Asteroids and Space Invaders. The sheer size and scope of the project means that whatever your poison, M.A.M.E has something for everyone – racers, platform games, shooters, strategy and one-off oddities are all represented, and it's this diversity which has made M.A.M.E today's leading emulator.

www.snes9x.com
Homepage to the Windows port of Snes9X, a cracking Super Nintendo emulator, which remains the fastest and most compatible SNES Emu available. Jeremy Koot, Snes9X's co-author, recounts the history of the program, and in common with most Emu projects, it is clear that the challenge of attempting the supposedly impossible was the motivation in coding the program.

'It all started with somebody saying to me: "Hey, you can't build a SNES [Super Nintendo Entertainment System] emulator." So my answer was: "Wanna bet?" That was in about 1995, when I started working on Snes95. It was never released, and emulated nothing more than the CPU. After that, I rewrote the whole program and made Snes96. The first release didn't do much, but soon thereafter it started playing games. It had its problems, though. Nearing 1997, the emulator had quirks I couldn't fix. At that point I gave the source code to a select group of people, and I quit the project.



Snow Bros: Who could forget this maddeningly addictive platform action?

Sigourney takes on the Aliens, again

'After getting input from other emulator authors and helping out one person working on Snes96, I started work on the emulator again and released Snes97. Meanwhile, Snes96 was still being developed by Gary Henderson [current main Snes9X author] and was leaping forward. I helped him, and he helped me. After a while we combined Snes96 and Snes97, adding the few neat features of Snes97 into Snes96. This resulted in Snes9X, a new version which was revolutionary [it being the first and, at that time, only emulator with sound]. After a while, we heard Nintendo was showing an interest, so we decided to quit Snes9X and not take the risk [of being sued]. After that, I stopped working on it, but Gary continued. He even found someone who wrote an initial SuperFX emulator and started implementing that into Snes9X.

'After several months, we still hadn't heard from Nintendo, and no other emulator authors were being sued, so we decided to release a new version: the first SNES emulator with SuperFX support. Since then, I only work on the Windows port of Snes9X; Gary does all the core emulation programming.'

The only realistic competitor is Zsnes, a slightly slower and less functional program. However, Zsnes enjoys a better front-end. Now that the source code to Snes9X has been released, things should hot up in this area. A slightly more sophisticated machine than the Megadrive, it has proved a tricky task to perfect emulation of the SNES. Even so, about 85 per cent of the back catalogue will now run effortlessly and at full speed on less than a ninja-bast PC, and within six months, SNES emulation should reach the

URwired.com
URwired!
URwired.com
We have the most unbelievable PC Game prices in the UK!
Baldur's Gate, Commandos, Conflict Freespace, Forsaken, Grand Prix Legends, Half-Life, Heretic 2, Spec Ops, Tomb Raider III, Total Air War, Turok 2, Urban Assault, Unreal
£1 OFF when you buy 2 games
£2 OFF when you buy 3 games
All of these titles at only £29.99 each including shipping and handling!
Visit our web shop on Http://www.URwired.com for even more incredible bargains on all our other games
Call us on 0171 937 8777 between 12pm and 8pm Monday to Saturday to talk to us for advice or to place an order!
All of our prices are net: they include recorded delivery anywhere in the UK
Fast delivery, Reviews, Cheats, Jokes, Links and more...
VISA
URwired.com
Available while stocks last. Prices include VAT, shipping and handling, and are correct at time of going to press. Prices subject to change. See http://www.URwired.com for our latest prices, full terms and conditions.

Rainbow Islands: This has to be platform antics at their best – a colourful classic

heights of its Megadrive counterparts. Some wonderful games graced the machine including Smash TV, Bugs Bunny, Earthworm Jim, and the seminal Donkey Kong series to name just a few.

http://joyce.eng.yale.edu/~bt/turbo/emu
Magic Engine, the finest PC engine emulator available, is found here. Registered users enjoy near 100 per cent reproduction of Hu-cards, and full CD support. This is a remarkable program, which mimics the original NEC machine superbly. Being a Japanese machine, the emphasis is firmly on instant fun and playability. The PC engine remains the best place to play hits like Galaga 88, Gradius, Gunhead and Twinbee. Shoot 'em-up fans will jump for joy at the speed and variety of blasters on offer, while the emulation is superb.

www.raine.retrogames.com/
The homepage for Raine, a multi-arcade game emulator. This program is a recent addition to the EMU scene. It has support for the classic Rainbow Islands, and has recently begun tackling Taito arcade games, such as Operation Wolf and Thunderbolt. Initially coded as a hobby, Raine has gone on to establish itself as a leading light in the emulation world, hosting classics such as Darius, Double Dragon 3, Final Blow, Puzzle Bobbles two and three, and Tetris.

Raine's author, Richard Bush, modestly recounts how Raine came into being: 'It started mainly out of curiosity, when Rainbow Islands was dumped [onto the Internet]. I was surprised when I got the game to actually start running, so I continued and also tried the same thing with some other games. I needed information for the protection chip in Rainbow Islands, so I put Raine online at a SNES game translation site. The next week, several emulation news sites had reported on Raine, and Dave's Classics [a leading Internet emulation site] was uploading the ROMs for Raine, despite it not really playing the games properly. This was a total surprise, as our SNES translations never got much news coverage and I'd made it clear in the documentation that Raine was just an experiment, and not to expect anything from it. After that, I smartened it up and got other games playable. In time, it started to look more like an emulator.'

http://ccs64.fatal-design.com/
Homepage to the best Commodore 64 emulator, CC64S. It's a shareware program, giving near 100 per cent emulation of the machine and its software. Things run a trifle slow, but that just adds to the authenticity!

Yoshi's Island: The crazzzzzy, calamity-ridden world of Yoshi's big-nosed friends

The only serious competitor, C64S, does enjoy better sound output and runs slightly faster, but it comes as crippled shareware and lasts only 15 minutes without being registered. Although thousands of game images are available for download, a good percentage appear to be corrupted to some degree. This, coupled with the slowness of loading, leads to frustration and detracts from the gaming experience.

Annoyances aside, the Commodore machine hosted some wonderful games. They include Wizball, Commando, Rambo, the Summer and Winter Games series, most of the Spectrum catalogue, and the seminal Mission Impossible.

http://abyss.moving-people.net/
Home to the System 16 arcade emulator. This program runs many classic Sega arcade games, including Outrun, Space Harrier, Dynamite Dux, Super Hang-on, and Shinobi. This is a superb, fully featured emulator which gains speed, compatibility, and support with each new release. Sega has a wonderful arcade heritage, and these games see the company at its creative best.

http://home5.swipenet.se/~w-50884/emulator/rage.htm
This is where you'll find RAGE, another superb arcade emulator. It started life running the seminal R-type, but has since blossomed into a leading multi-arcade game emulator. It now includes support for Gunsmoke, Ikari Warriors, Victory Road and others. Its author bucks the trend by going for quality rather than quantity.
Paul Ditta

A ScottishTelecom Company

demon@front

we're not just out in front when it comes to getting people on the internet . we're also on the front of this magazine , giving away a free 30-day trial on the free cd . it gets you on-line as easily and quickly as is humanly possible . so if you're not on-line yet , now's your chance to be at the forefront of technology .

Demon Internet

more people get on with us

0800 027 9214

www.demon.net email : sales@demon.net

SCREAM TICKET!

Theme Park fans who want to see more of the whirled get their chance in the latest from Chris 'Transport Tycoon' Sawyer – **RollerCoaster Tycoon**

A whole range of rides can be seen here, including the tower in the centre, which forms the support structure for the magnetically launched reverse freefall coaster

Although most people seem to think that wooden coasters must be old, they are enjoying a huge resurgence in popularity

Chris Sawyer is one of the unsung stars of the British games industry. In 1994 he almost single-handedly produced the popular Transport Tycoon for MicroProse, and followed this up with a number of add-ons and enhanced versions.

Now he has turned his attention to another multimillion dollar business: the amusement ride industry. Working from his home in a small village in Perthshire, Sawyer has designed and programmed the game entirely on his own, using freelancers to provide the graphics and sound. Yet although this seems like a highly ambitious undertaking, Sawyer has researched his topic so well that even die-hard coaster enthusiasts (self included!) have been amazed by the authenticity of the rides and the amazing attention to detail.

Unlike Bullfrog's 1994 game, Theme Park, you are not limited to just two types of coaster and a selection of spin rides, but can build almost every type of ride available to real parks this year. From the look of it, Roller Coaster Tycoon will be a huge smash, not only with fans of games like SimCity, Transport Tycoon and Theme Park, but also with coaster enthusiasts who have been bemoaning a lack of a coaster-based game since Disney's Coaster went out of production. So let's see what the man has to say for himself

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

PCGW: First, just how much of a passion for rollercoasters do you have? As a fellow enthusiast, I have to admit I was surprised when I looked at the screenshots and saw how authentic the coasters looked, right down to the type of track used. You don't often get that much attention to detail in a game.

Chris Sawyer: I don't think I had much of a passion for rollercoasters when I started the project – I've always admired the engineering, the design, and the 'look' of rollercoasters, but up until a few years ago I didn't really enjoy riding them, and certainly wasn't an enthusiast. RollerCoaster Tycoon started as a simple construction set game for building and running simple rollercoasters, but while doing initial research I began to really enjoy rollercoasters. The development of the game and my enthusiasm for rollercoasters then fed off each other.

PCGW: Did you do all the research yourself or did you get help from ride engineers and coaster experts?

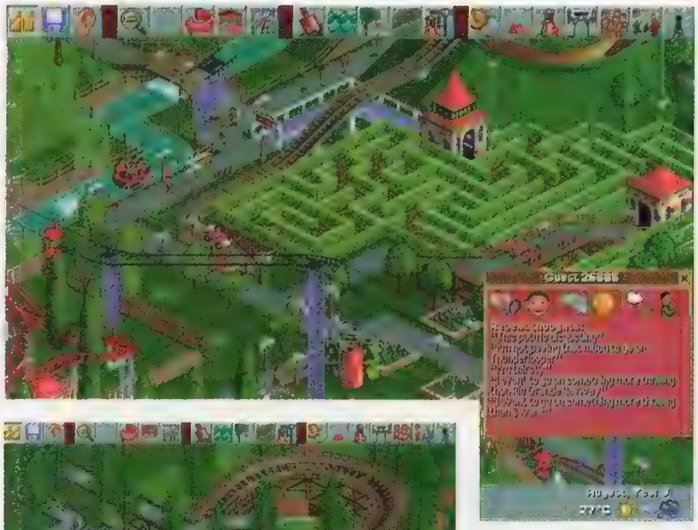
CS: I did most research myself, using books, magazines, and other material I came across. I found I could get easily enough information this way, and I wanted to minimise the number of people who knew about the game during development.

PCGW: What about 'practical' research? I read that you started off at a park in Yorkshire. Was that Flamingoland or Lightwater Valley?

CS: Lightwater Valley was both the first park I visited while developing the game, and also the park I visited most often. I'd always meant to visit Flamingoland sometime but never did – somehow I always ended up heading for Lightwater Valley. Originally I think it was the lure of their small underground rollercoaster 'The Rat', which although very small is just great fun to ride time after time. More recently I've gained a taste for

Above: Game designer Chris Sawyer (front row, nearest camera) enjoying Alton Towers' Oblivion like a true enthusiast

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANTONIO ZAZUETA OLMOS



Left: You need more than just coasters in a park. Attractions such as the maze offer a break from all the adrenaline. Above right: Guests let you know what they think of the rides. This boy finds the slow pace of the Mine Tour a bit too boring for his tastes. Left: If you are short of space, you can run rides over the top of each other. Here a go-kart track passes over the coaster

the back seat of their 'Ultimate' rollercoaster [currently the world's longest coaster at 7,450 feet], managing to get 10 rides in on my last trip. I haven't done as much research as I would have liked – apart from various trips to Lightwater Valley, I've visited Blackpool Pleasure Beach a few times, Strathclyde Country Park a couple of times, Loudoun Castle Park several times (including riding their Schwarzkopf Looping Star continuously until I was so ill I was in bed for several days), FrontierLand (Morecambe), Oakwood, and only a couple of months ago, Alton Towers.

PCGW: So what did you think of Oblivion? I notice you have one in the game.

CS: I only visited Alton Towers once during development of the game – ironically it wasn't until the game was virtually finished. I wasn't expecting much of Oblivion, but I was actually very impressed. It's like no other rollercoaster I've been on – it gives a unique thrill.

PCGW: How does RollerCoaster Tycoon work?

CS: There is an assortment of scenarios – in some you start with an area of land, in others you start with a small amusement park, or even a large park which needs improving, or has problems which need solving. Each scenario starts with only a few types of rides available – further ride types, attractions and scenery become available only after spending money on research. Most scenarios have a very simple objective to achieve, for example, to have at least 1,000 guests in the park by the end of the third year of business.

PCGW: Do you have to grapple with problems like planning permission? I know parks like Alton Towers and Chessington have terrible problems getting permission to build rides.

CS: The game doesn't deal with this as such, but in some of the more difficult scenarios the land available for purchase is restricted.

PCGW: What are some of the other problems you have to face during the game?

CS: There are things like excessive litter, unhappy guests, over-long queues, and vandalism. And rides break down if they're badly maintained or getting old. Some types of breakdown are harmless and just cause inconvenience, but if brakes fail on a rollercoaster things can be a bit more catastrophic.

PCGW: What types of coaster can you build?

CS: All new ride types are 'researched' in the game. You specify the level of funding and whether you want research restricted to just certain groups of rides like rollercoasters or thrill rides, or enhancements to existing rides. Eventually your research department comes up with the latest ride development for you to use.

PCGW: Have you included any newer coaster technologies such as magnetically launched (LIM or LSM) rides, pipeline coasters and the like?

CS: I've based most rides in the game on successful existing prototypes – I haven't taken things into the future or put in experimental rides, but LIM-launched rollercoasters do feature later in the game.

PCGW: How much control over the design of the coaster will you have?

CS: Rollercoasters are built by plugging pre-set pieces of track together. This makes track construction very straightforward, and although it limits what you can build, the vast set of angled, sloped, and special track elements means you can build virtually any track layout.

PCGW: What about themeing? Rides like Alton's Nemesis and Disneyland Paris's Space Mountain are good coasters in their own right, but it's the themeing that makes them special.

Getting the Excitement rating for your rides to a maximum is a major part of the game as you can charge more for rides and make more money

CS: Themeing and scenery are very important. Each ride the player builds is given three 'ratings' by the game, Intensity, Excitement, and Nausea. The Intensity and Nausea ratings are straightforward, based mostly on factors such as G forces, rotations, speed and so on, but the Excitement rating is also affected by nearby scenery and themeing. Basic scenery like trees and gardens are available when the game starts, but further items can be researched, like Egyptian or Toyland themeing objects. Getting the Excitement rating for your rides to a maximum is a major part of the game, as this

means you can charge more for rides and make more money.

PCGW: What's the minimum specification PC you're aiming at?

CS: The game requires a minimum of a P100 running Win95 with 16Mb RAM. Faster processors and more RAM improve the animation considerably, and I'd recommend at least a P200 MMX with 32Mb of RAM to get the best out of the game.

PCGW: How has working on RollerCoaster Tycoon compared with working on Transport Tycoon?

CS: RollerCoaster Tycoon has been a much larger project than Transport Tycoon, but has been much more fun to develop. They were both developed in similar ways though, both inspired by my own game-playing desires and developed into virtually complete games before approaching publishers.

PCGW: What aspect of the game do you feel most proud of?

CS: That's difficult. There are many aspects of the game which I'm proud of, most of them technical features which most players won't appreciate, but perhaps the one aspect which stands out above all the rest is the 'atmosphere' created in the game by the use of sound, graphical style, and animation. Static screenshots don't give the full impression of how much the animation and sound add to the game. Everything gels together to make the whole game look and feel like your own little amusement park world, a world which is fascinating to just watch, and even more rewarding to play in.

PCGW: It sounds great. I see you're now a member of the Roller Coaster Club of Great Britain, so it's obviously got you hooked. Do you think it will be an enduring interest?

CS: One day I may give up computer games development, but I will still be riding and enjoying rollercoasters. I've been fascinated by rollercoaster developments, the innovative new designs and the re-emergence of classical designs, and I'm looking forward to seeing and riding whatever great new thrills the parks and designers can come up with.

Cal Jones

COASTER CLUBS

To find out more about roller coasters, visit:

Roller Coaster Club of Great Britain: **www.rccgb.co.uk**

European Coaster Club: **ds.dial.pipex.com/ecc/**

COASTERPAEDIA

The casual park goer would be amazed at the sheer variety of the coasters you'll find around the world. Chris Sawyer has attempted to include as many as possible in this game – here his selection

1 **Bobsled** Bobsleds run not on tracks but down a steeply banked trough, mimicking the thrills of the Cresta Run. Real life example: Avalanche at Blackpool Pleasure Beach (manufacturer: Mack)

2 **Dive** The dive machine is new this year – a coaster that dangled you over a near-vertical drop before plummeting down. Real life example: Oblivion at Alton Towers (manufacturer: Bolliger & Mabillard)

3 **Inverter** The inverted looping coaster first appeared in 1992, and has been outstandingly popular ever since. Real life example: Nemesis at Alton Towers (manufacturer: Bolliger & Mabillard)

4 **Mouse** Wild mouse coasters are relatively cheap and good fun, especially when made out of wood. Real life example: Wild Mouse at Blackpool Pleasure Beach (manufacturer: in-house)

5 **Twister** The classic wooden twister is as popular as ever, despite the versatility of steel. Real life example: MegaFobia at Oakwood, Wales (manufacturer: Custom Coasters International)

6 **Racer** Racing coasters, traditionally wooden, are also enormously popular. Real life example: Stampida at Port Aventura, Salou, Spain (manufacturer: Custom Coasters International)

7 **Pier** The simple family steel coaster is fun for younger riders, and most parks have one. Real life example: Treetops at Oakwood, Wales (manufacturer: Zierer)

WHAT'S IN

A look at the ins, outs, and dirty secrets of designing computer games from people who do it every day

Much of game design seems a black art to players, whose involvement with the process generally starts with picking the finished article off the shelf and ends with waiting for an inevitable series of patches. But what goes on behind the scenes? How do some teams create StarCrafts, Longbow 2s, and Battlezones, while others churn out Nams, Dominions and Silent Thunders?

The process is dramatically different for each genre. While story is design king in a roleplaying game, it's realism that matters in simulations and sports games. So join us now as we dive into the trenches and ask the experts, 'How do you make a good game?'

FLIGHT SIMULATIONS: A CRASH COURSE

'Unfortunately, to create a great simulation, flight model, avionics, enemy AI and good graphics are only the start.' – Gilman 'Chopstick' Louie in the Falcon 4.0 Designer's Notes.

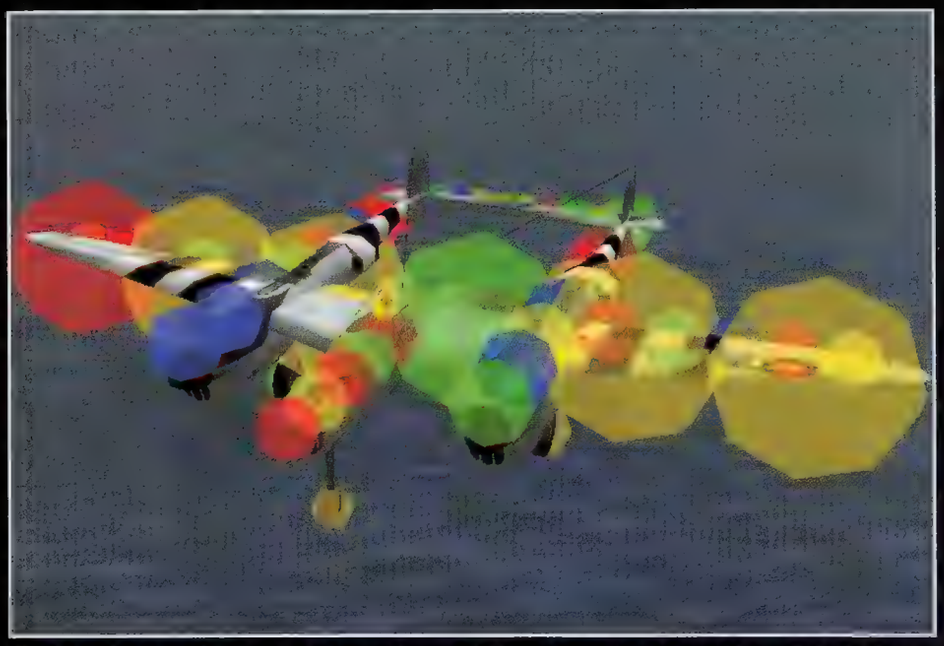
Flight simulations are arguably the most complex of all computer games to create. Where the existence of gravity or momentum passes for 'real physics' in some game genres, flight sim designers face a demanding audience that not only knows how real planes fly, but also how the pilots fly them.

As Andy Hollis (best known for the Jane's Longbow series and F-15) says, 'First, you have to build a complete simulation of a real airplane. Then, you have to build a graphics environment in which to fly the thing. And it must work well – up high and from a distance, and down low and close. Finally, you have to make a compelling mission environment in which to play the game. Basically you have to build a commercial-grade military simulator and a great game all at once.'

The first step in building a flight sim is choosing what you're going to simulate. I asked Hollis how Jane's chooses which platform to simulate.

'We look at a number of factors,' Hollis says. 'How well known is the subject aircraft? Clearly an F-15 is more well known than an F-4. Niche aircraft usually lose out here.' So if you've been holding out hope for that Fairey Firefly sim, it's time to move on.

Next, Hollis says, they ask: 'how interesting is the role of the aircraft?' Aircraft that are pure strikers or pure dogfighters provide less variety for the player. Better to have lots of interesting situations to play out. Also: 'has the aircraft been involved in noteworthy conflicts?' For some historical sims, this is the key question to ask, particularly with multiple aircraft.



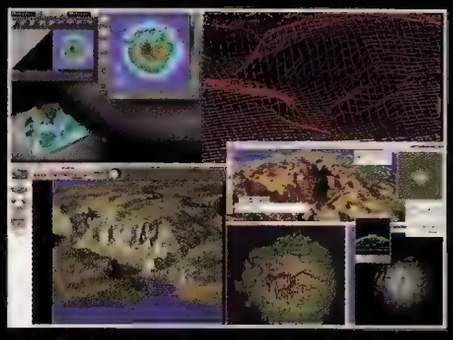
Flight sim designers face a demanding audience who know how planes fly and how pilots fly them

The next consideration is how much information is available on the aircraft. Hollis explains: 'We need to have access to enough real data on the plane to create accurate flight models, complete avionics suites, and realistic mission profiles.'

Building flight models is a difficult task, made worse when the planes you're simulating were last used in battle over 80 years ago. According to Matt Shaw (currently working on Infogrames' Fighter Duel: 'Some aircraft are easy to get flight data on (reams on the P-51 and so on). Some are more difficult, and for others flight data doesn't exist in any form (like the Japanese J7W1 Shinden). Furthermore, field modifications to aircraft were quite common in WWII, sometimes dramatically changing the flight characteristics of a particular aircraft model. The addition of metal ailerons to the Spitfire is a good example.'

Once the planes are in place, you need someone to fly them. It's up to the

A GAME?



Terrain: the biggest challenge for designers

developer to create convincing AI pilots to take the controls of enemy and allied aircraft – demonstrating human-like sighting models and behaviour such as minor course corrections, drifting in formation and target fixation. As Mike McGrath of the Red Baron 3D team says: 'In addition to being an effective combatant, it has to make mistakes, and it has to be vulnerable. It doesn't have a joystick, or a throttle, but it must behave as though it does.'

Finally, a flight sim has to have a convincing environment. Terrain graphics still don't come close to the view out a real cockpit. So how long until we get truly photorealistic graphics?

Fly!'s Richard Harvey says: 'It's simply a matter of hardware catching up. Our scenery system can handle sub-one-metre data, and our models can handle textures of any size. The biggest problem is: does the gamer have a video card that can handle true colour, with a sizeable texture cache on board, with a z-buffer large enough for the desired resolution, plus enough RAM and processor to handle a hyper-detailed elevation model and render a city full of buildings?'

Even if you have the hardware, the other problem is the sheer volume of storage space needed for photorealistic imagery of large areas. Pro Pilot's Brian Gallardo says: ' To put things in perspective, there are about 150 million square kilometres of land on the surface of the earth. To cover that with photo-realistic textures whose pixels are one metre wide would require about 150 tera-pixels [over 238,000 CDs!]. If you reduced the resolution to make them all fit on a single 9Gb DVD disc, your pixels would be about 128 metres wide. Not very realistic.'

ACTION GAMES: BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS

Making a clever and balanced set of design decisions could mean you end up with a winner

The process of building a thrill-a-second action game is more concerned with problem-solving than nail-biting excitement. Even a bottom-of-the-barrel game like Nam is shaped by a seemingly endless litany of decisions.

Before any work can be done, someone has to have an idea. Zack Norman comments on the birth of Interstate '76: 'My partner Sean and I were sitting in an Italian restaurant. I was looking through the listings in *Auto Trader* magazine since I'd decided to get myself a bitchin' 70s Barracuda as a reward for finishing MechWarrior 2, when it hit me like a bolt out of the blue – why not?'

To break away from the pack of copycat action games, a game needs a strong, conceptual identity. According to Norman: 'Any game design should be encapsulated in one to three sentences. Every design element should be compared against that ideal. Interstate '76 was 70s muscle cars with guns, *Mad Max* meets *Shaft*.' With this philosophy in place, certain design choices can decide themselves – such as Interstate '76's funk soundtrack.

To deliver speed, graphics and unrelenting action, designers need to decide which engine (in first-person shooters this would be Quake or Unreal) to use, or – as Monolith has done for Shogo and Blood 2 – build their own.

Klingon Honor Guard uses the Unreal engine. Producer Alex DeLucia explains his choice this way: 'The only engine available was Quake I, which didn't have coloured lighting and was limited to 8-bit rendering. We saw an early version of the Unreal engine and were very impressed by its graphic capabilities. Those issues, and the financial aspects, made it more attractive.' Still, the Klingon team had to add their own code, too.

Ever since Doom, action titles have pretty much been required to provide multiplayer options, and designing for multiplayer action presents a different set of problems. Brandon James of Id's Quake III: Arena team explains: 'Our biggest hurdle is to keep the game challenging while trying to give players an equal chance in the match. Balancing out the experiences, effects, pluses and minuses, as well as introducing new weapons, power-ups, and items is necessary to keep a player's interest high.'

From the initial idea to the last patch posted on the Internet, designing action games is an almost ceaseless process of recognising and defeating obstacles. In a sense, the process isn't all that different from playing a shooter – see the problem, blow it away. Make the right series of decisions and you can wind up with a classic like Quake. Make the wrong choices, fail to balance multiplayer or design an interface that requires a prehensile tongue to use effectively, and you'll wind up gibbed by the competition.

ADVENTURE/ROLEPLAYING GAMES: UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITY EXPLORER

Both adventure games and roleplaying games are essentially 'gated' stories. They are like the old days at Disneyland when you needed separate tickets to ride an attraction. You need 'tickets' to move the story forward – to get through the 'gates' the designers put up. The 'tickets' can be either objects (keys, clues, and 'McGuffins') or 'must-do' activities (puzzles solved, rooms explored, characters met, and conversations held).

But which comes first? The story, the game universe, the technology…?

Brian Fargo, the founder and original roleplaying mentor at Interplay, believes designers are essentially tied to the twin paradigms of medieval and science-fiction adventures. 'Our industry often gets criticised for not being creative, but whenever anyone strays too far from medieval and science-fiction games, they get hammered.'

Assuming that fantasy or science-fiction is a given, Fargo says that the Interplay approach is to start with the psychology of the game. 'With Stonekeep, for example, the philosophy was to go back to the roots of what made roleplaying accessible and enjoyable. As much as we object to artificiality, there's still a great deal of satisfaction in finding a +2 sword.'

Richard Garriott (Lord British) complains about the prevalence of bad fantasy where the climax involves the hero discovering a magical McGuffin with superpowerful characteristics. 'That,' he protests, 'is cheating.' He believes that one of the most important aspects of roleplaying design is having an internal self-consistency and depth that will be expressed in the storyline of the universe. 'If you're going to develop plot elements or characters, you have to start with a vision for the reality of the world. That's why I start off with the geographical flora and fauna as well as politics and philosophy.'

Jon van Caneghem believes that a man's gotta know his limitations. According to the designer of the Might & Magic series, 'Technology is first – what the game can do. Once I know what the new engine can do, I start to flush out the gameplay and what you can do in the game. From that, I build the storyline and the characters – what and who they're going to be. Then, we architect the overall story.'

To populate this game world requires two systems: one to design the player character(s) and one for non-player characters.

In roleplaying games in particular the player characters have to develop. Fargo observes: 'Neuromancer could only work with knowledge additions. Password oriented stuff and obtaining new software was more interesting than level development or attribute increases.'

A cardinal rule for Zeb Cook (formerly an AD&D designer at TSR, now at Interplay) is to make sure that everyone can't be good at everything. 'I did the Conan roleplaying game for TSR. It wasn't fun. It had an interesting character development system, but no one wanted to play the sidekicks.'

Lord British: Start with a vision of the reality

The next consideration is the level of detail of the non-player characters. Lord British says his philosophy on this has changed. 'In the earlier days, we tried to mechanically simulate every possible reaction. The more we tried, the more mechanical they seemed. Now, we only try to simulate what is appropriate to a character.'

Fargo believes the secret is 'to get non-player characters to do things in the game that will cause you to remember them. I'd rather do four or five things really well than insert elaborate learning systems.'

Where the two game styles really differ is combat – essential in roleplaying games, but extremely rare in adventures. As Cook suggests, 'Combat AI is where all the effort needs to be placed. How is this guy going to fight and how are his buddies going to react? That's where the world comes to life.'

Cook believes the AI should be as unscripted as possible. 'Scripted things break down quickly if you haven't thought of what can happen in advance. The best combat AI considers the world-state and chooses the best response from the parameters of the situation.'

The goal, of course, of every gated story is to give gamers the sense of having experienced another world, and the sense of having affected, changed and transformed that other world. To succeed, there must be a credible world to change; personalities with which to interact; dynamic tension to resolve (by conversation or combat); and a story to be told. Each puzzle, encounter, conversation, discovery, or deed opens more of the story. Nothing happens by chance.

Fargo: Get non-player characters to do things in the game that will cause you to remember them

SPORTS: BRAINS, PASSION – AND MASOCHISM

Sport, like politics and religion, engenders a gut-level, intractable set of emotions, opinions, biases, and theories in those who care – and woe betide the person who messes with someone else's sports reality.

As a game developer it's your job to create an illusion of sports reality. You want your game to be as realistic as possible, but you also want it to be fun and the most comprehensive, definitive game ever on the sport – but you've probably got less than a year to make it.

Company after company gets into the sports gaming business, only to give up either before or after their first product is released. Even Microsoft, with all its resources, is having trouble with its sports games development.

Sports developers have a unique set of problems. For the most part, sports games are yearly products constantly in development, and constantly being shoved out the door to correspond with real-life sporting seasons. The makers of football, baseball and golf games have just one year to design, produce, and hone their product.

Think, then, of the process less as a straight line, but as a circle – perhaps even as a race track – with the game constantly spinning round, trying to stay ahead of its competitors, checking in regularly to the pit for updates, technological improvements, bug fixes, and, in some cases, wholesale re-writes.

Most designers seemed to agree, however, that, no matter how tight your schedule, it's crucial that you always keep a fresh perspective. 'It is important to start with a blank page,' said Marc Aubanel, producer of EA Sports' FIFA 99, 'because you carry the baggage of a year's worth of development. We start [each year] by taking a fresh look at the gaming market in general to look for trends and design improvements in other genres.'

The most crucial design decision in any sports game is just how realistic to make the game. The big rub – the one that often trips up developers – is that the more realistic you say your game is, the harder the fans will treat it if it doesn't feel right. If you go the other way, you're cut more slack, but you risk turning off the more 'serious' fans of the sport. Finding the balance is a very tricky business.

'This is the hardest part of the job,' said FIFA's Aubanel. 'We have always biased FIFA playability over realism. In fact, if you look at most sports games, the scores are usually unrealistically high and the physics models are all accelerated.'

Most producers tend to agree with Aubanel, that there actually is such a thing as 'too much realism'. As Steve Letsom, director of Sierra Sports' fishing games put it: 'Imagine yourself sitting at the computer for hours, not being able to catch a fish. That's like the real world, and it sucks!'

And, of course, multiplayer considerations, once an afterthought, are now part of the process from day one for every sports game developer – because they have to be. Those who decide to add it later usually pay a price.

Realism is crucial: Too much and fans will treat your game harsh if it doesn't live up to your marketing, too little and you deter 'serious' fans

Vance Cook at Sierra's Golf series says: 'We learned the hard way that a game must be designed and developed with multiplayer in mind. FPS:Golf added multiplayer capabilities later in the development process. It was more work and less stable than PGA Championship Golf.'

Endurance, strength, conviction, and a will to succeed against impossible odds. These are the qualities found in the best athletes, and they're also the ones that distinguish the best sports game designers. Every force is conspired against them: employers, budgets, deadlines and their fans' high expectations.

Keep a fresh perspective by regularly looking at the gaming market for trends and design improvements in other genres

STRATEGY & WARGAMING: MAKING IT NEITHER A CIV NOR COMMAND & CONQUER CLONE...

Game design legends Peter Molyneaux and Sid Meier each gave a dinner speech at the recent Milia Conference in France. Molyneaux went on at length about the trials and tribulations of crafting interactive entertainment, complete with lots of suffering for your art and giving up years of your life. When it was Sid's turn to speak, he looked up and remarked: 'I don't know what business Peter's in, but I'm perfectly happy to be designing games for a living. It's a pretty good life, and after you reach a certain point, they feed you pretty well.' The irony, of course, is that both Sid and Peter are right.

So, what's the first question everyone asks about a strategy game? 'Is it turn-based or real-time?' This black-and-white view totally ignores the fact that there are multiple flavours of each. Rick Martinez, who has designed both turn-based strategy/war games – Panzer General II, among others – and real-time combat simulations (Panzer Commander), thinks the whole turn-based versus real-time strategy game debate is blown out of proportion.

'There are situations where real-time works well – for instance, if you're trying to simulate WWII squad-level combat. What's important is that your design approach has the proper feel – historical, sci-fi, or whatever – for recreating that atmosphere that you're striving for.'

Even Meier has struggled with the real-time/turn-based dichotomy while playing Will Wright's SimCity. 'I wanted to design the same thing, but with more competitive gameplay. Eventually, I had this game where you were managing multiple cities in a real-time environment. It was really interesting for a little while. Then you'd get stuck in one city, and by the time you got back to the strategic level, you had no idea where you were in the overall game. Once I made the Civ design turn-based, I was able to keep the level of detail and the depth of decision-making where it was challenging, but still manageable enough to be fun.'

Almost every successful strategy game designer interviewed kept referring back to focus: the importance of having a solid game design concept before the first line of code is written. Watching Steve Barcia work with his team at Simtex, for example, was like going back in time to board game design sessions at Avalon Hill. Engineers were going over algorithms on paper and jotting down formulae on chalkboards, arguing over which would work better with character design or firepower modifiers.

First and foremost, AI is the computer opponent, which may or may not obviously cheat. Second, it's the code that directs the 'wingman' routines for those units you don't directly micro-manage every second of the game. Finally, AI also covers such mundane routines as pathfinding.

'There is nothing more obvious and frustrating,' says Greg Borrud (Dark Reign) 'than bad AI in an real-time strategy game. I can't tell you how many times we have yelled and screamed at "stupid" units. That's why we made AI, and specifically player orders, one of the key features of Dark Reign.'

In the old Atari days, Chris Crawford and Dave Menconi had to tweak the AI for Eastern Front – written in 4Kb of memory – to make it competitive, a huge task. During playtesting, they found that a bug in the retreat routines for the Russian units actually made them advance after losing. Since it made the game tougher, they left the bug in! This is an example of a 'good cheat', because it not only added fun to the game, it was also close to recreating the 'pockets' historically caused by the rapid advance of the Wehrmacht.

The lesson for game designers, then, is to worry less about fuzzy logic, neural networking, or other trendy programming, and to show some imagination, and some passion – whether the subject is turn-based fantasy, cerebral real-time historical, or hybrid grand strategic sci-fi.

Your design approach should have the proper feel for recreating the atmosphere you want

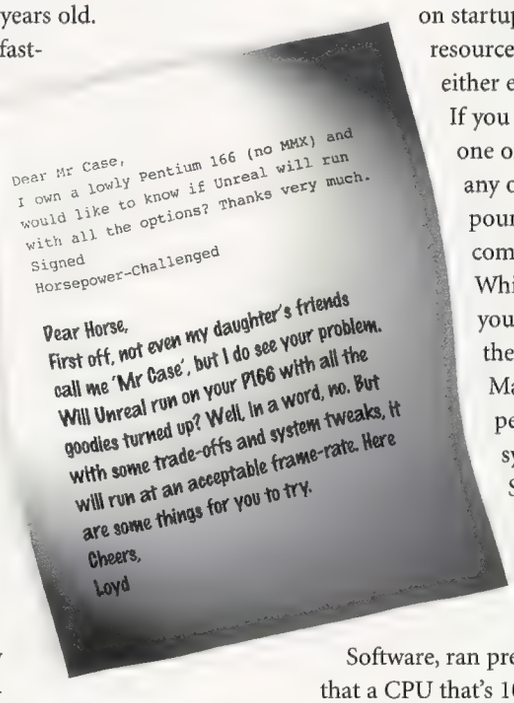
Writers:
Denny Atkin, Robert Coffey, Johnny L Wilson, Jeff Green

THAT WAS THE TWEAK THAT WAS

Your P166 can be made to last another gaming season if you make a few sacrifices and tweak it to the max

Let's talk about living within your means. I drive a 1992 Volkswagen Golf GTI with 83,000 miles on it. I say this not to brand myself as some kind of ageing yuppie – though I probably am – but to point out that this vehicle is now seven years old. Seven years ago, we were barely into the 486 era in personal computing, and most of the people reading this are probably not using a computer that's seven years old.

Still, I've gone on about the issue of fast-moving technology many times. I'm confessing to driving a seven-year-old car now to point out that I have a budget for cars. As much as Wolfsburg or Longbridge might like it, I can't buy a car every two years. Luckily, cars are a relatively mature technology, and I can happily continue cruising well past 100,000 miles.


Dear Mr Case,
I own a lowly Pentium 166 (no MMX) and would like to know if Unreal will run with all the options? Thanks very much.
Signed
Horsepower-Challenged
Dear Horse,
First off, not even my daughter's friends call me 'Mr Case', but I do see your problem. Will Unreal run on your P166 with all the goodies turned up? Well, in a word, no. But with some trade-offs and system tweaks, it will run at an acceptable frame-rate. Here are some things for you to try.
Cheers,
Loyd

Lately, I've been getting a flurry of emails like the one on the right, so this month I'm going to try to collectively answer all of your tweaking/upgrading questions.

Since computers are a big part of how I make my living, upgrading fairly often makes sense for me. But like anyone, I have a budget for computers – mine just happens to be bigger (the wonders of business tax deductions help). Most of us don't have big budgets, though, and many of us have to live with hand-me-downs or used computers.

Now, let's think of your computer as having its own budget – the performance budget. You have a P166 or, if you're lucky, a 200MHz Pentium MMX. Given the demands of today's latest game titles, how can you best use that limited resource?

First, take a look at your system and make sure you're getting the best possible use out of it. If you don't have the money to spend on expensive upgrades, consider at least moving to 64Mb of RAM. It's surprising how much a little added memory can work wonders in Windows games. Memory, at least, is fairly cheap now. In most Pentium systems, though, more than 64Mb does you no good, and may even slow down your system. So don't get more than 64Mb.

Beyond dropping more cash, you can spend some time tuning the performance of your system. All the usual tricks work well.

First, create a fixed-size swap file. Assuming your disk budget is as tight as your pound-budget, make it a relatively small number, like 64Mb. You do this in the Windows system control panel, under the Performance tab. The virtual memory button will take you to your virtual memory settings.

Next, make sure you're not loading unnecessary programs on startup. This eats into both memory and system resources. Also, some memory resident software can either eat CPU cycles or create a frenzy of disk activity.

If you don't have Win98, take the time to download one of the Ziff-Davis benchmarks – but be aware that any of them is a big download – or spend a few pounds and buy a WinBench 99 CD, which also comes with Audio WinBench and 3D WinBench. While the benchmarks can help you determine how your system's performance changes as you tweak it, the real gem is the Startup Manager. Startup Manager can turn off the autoloading of those pesky applications that are set to AutoStart in the system registry. If you have Windows 98, use the System Configuration Utility (MSCONFIG.EXE) to manage your AutoStart programs. With MSCONFIG you can also manage the stuff in your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files.

Doom, that breakthrough shooter from Id Software, ran pretty well on a 66MHz 486. So it stands to reason that a CPU that's 100MHz faster and has other optimisations should do far better. What's useful is to use a game like Doom or Duke Nukem 3D (which looks a little better) as a point of reference. Let's assume you get decent performance out of Duke Nukem 3D. Let that be your budget standard for graphical eye candy. When you run a newer game, like Unreal, think about how you can tweak the settings so it doesn't look worse than Duke 3D. That way, you can manage your expectations. While Unreal may look gorgeous on a fast Pentium II with a new 3D accelerator, you probably won't be able to achieve that glossy sheen on your system.

Of course, you may have to adjust the resolution as well. Face it: you won't be able to run Quake II at 800x600 – that's a fact of life. But you shouldn't let that detract from your enjoyment of a title. Some games, like Quake II, won't let you easily tweak many of the graphics enhancements, but Quake II supports many different resolutions. Start at 320x240 and work your way up until your frame-rate starts to tank. Remember, 320x240 was good enough for Doom.

Don't forget to tweak your game's audio as well. You may get a

surprising frame-rate boost by going to four audio streams rather than eight, assuming you can dial that down in the game.

One way to avoid the frustration of games running deathly slow on your setup is to read the system requirements on the game's box before you buy it. I know it sounds daft, but it can save you much pain and suffering. Some turn-based strategy games might run fine, despite the difference in what's recommended and what you have. You may just have to wait longer between turns while the AI moves. But if it's a real-time strategy game or an action game, it's best to avoid frustration and get something else.

When you buy an add-on, buy with an eye to the future. Most people tend to get seduced by new technology. If a reader asks me if he or she should get a RIVA TNT board for their P200, I tend to steer them to a Voodoo 2 card instead. The RIVA TNT is a great chip, but if you're upgrading in the future, your new system will almost certainly have a fast AGP card (maybe even a TNT-based board). But the reliable Voodoo2 will come over to a new system just fine. Think about how to maximise tomorrow's purchases when you're making one today.

That rule applies for any component purchase. Buying a new hard drive? Get one that supports UltraDMA/33. Looking at a new monitor? Get a big one – a 17-inch or 19-inch monitor. Need a sound card? Get a good PCI sound card if you have a free PCI slot. In other words, get a component upgrade that will play well with a future upgrade. That will save you money in the long run.

Living within a performance budget is a frustrating task sometimes. Think of it as a learning process. As you tweak your system, you may learn more about system configurations, the Device Manager, and Windows than you ever wanted. On the other hand, knowledge is a good thing. So when a hot new title comes out that screams for huge system requirements, don't immediately despair. If you're willing to make a few sacrifices in eye candy, audio fidelity, and resolution, you may find that game becomes perfectly playable.

Loyd Case

TECH TIPS

Q: I just got a system with a PCI modem in it, but the ping times are much slower than with my old 28.8kbps modem. What gives?

A: It is a sad truth that PCI modems are slower than their ISA counterparts. There's only one PCI modem chipset out there, and it is a Winmodem, meaning that the CPU does most of the actual work. The PCI modem simply provides the connection and translation to the phone line. My advice is, don't get a PCI modem. If your system comes with one, get an ISA modem or, better yet, an external modem.

Q: I've heard that AGP 2x boards (like the RIVA TNT) don't work well with K6-2. Is that correct?

A: The problem wasn't the K6-2, but the so-called Super 7 motherboards. The latest AGP drivers seemed to have fixed most of the problems, though you may have to get a new version of the motherboard itself. Check also with your graphics card vendor for recent drivers. In most cases, the new motherboard AGP drivers and graphics card drivers have fixed the problem. (ALi can be found at www.acerlabs.com. VIA is at www.via.com.tw. SIS is at www.sis.com.tw.)

NEXT MONTH

Heaps of great games out there right now. In the next couple of months: Alpha Centauri, Total Annihilation: Kingdoms, SimCity 3000, Homeworld, Brian Lara Cricket Championship, Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance, Age Of Empires II: Age Of Kings, Driver, Outcast, TOCA Touring Car 2. Not forgetting C&C Tiberian Sun. Definitely not forgetting C&C Tiberian Sun. We'll have all the latest on these great games and many more next issue. We may even deliver our verdict on a couple of them (though, as usual, if a game's not finished, it won't get reviewed). Aside from all this great stuff we'll be taking a look at DVD. What is it good for? We're certainly wondering. And for all the speed freaks out there – we'll be looking at the new processor technologies now available and comparing them bang-for-buck-wise

Every new game reviewed and rated ● Distinctively styled and rather fact-packed ● Featuring two demo-packed CDs

PC GAMING WORLD

Issue 27

On sale: 25 February

All the game reviews. All the new demos. Our advice would be to buy it

RETURN OF THE GDI

It's official: by Easter you'll be playing the follow-up to the biggest-selling strategy game series in history as The Global Defence Initiative and the Brotherhood Of NOD return to the fray in a world devastated by Tiberium. Command & Conquer is back – at last...

Last summer we brought you the first ever news and images of the successor to Command & Conquer and Red Alert – Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun. Originally scheduled for release before Christmas it has now slipped, one last time – allegedly, to the beginning of April. In the meantime, Westwood Studios, Command & Conquer's Las Vegas-based creator, has been snapped up from Virgin Interactive by Electronic Arts as part of a $200 million deal which has certainly had some bearing on the timing of the launch. We recently spoke to Westwood co-founder and vice-president, Louis Castle, who maintains that the move to Electronic Arts has allowed more time to refine the product. 'With Virgin we could have found ourselves under pressure to release products like Lands Of Lore III and Tiberian Sun earlier, but Electronic Arts is giving us the extra time we need to release the products as we want them to be'.

Command & Conquer is a game that launched a thousand imitators, and one of the primary goals of the Tiberian Sun team is to create something which retains all the proven gameplay features and familiar user interface of its predecessors, while pushing it in terms of scale of play, looks and innovation. This game has been two years in the making and it is crucial for Westwood to get it right with stiff competition from the likes of Cavedog and Blizzard. To this end Westwood is testing the limitations of its voxel-based engine with 3D-deformable terrain, complex lighting routines, a multitude of new weapons and units, multi-layered surfaces including the ability to traverse beneath raised roads and

Some of GDI's new weapons (including a Hover Multiple Rocket Launcher and a couple of Powered Assault Armour walkers) are about to come to a sticky end – courtesy of NOD's base defences

bridges, and indeed, mine and destroy them.

For those not up to speed with the plot, the old rivalry between the Messiac Kane's Brotherhood Of NOD, a gigantic world-wide terrorist organisation, and the United Nations-created Global Defence Initiative forms the basis for the battles in Tiberian Sun. It takes up the story in the 21st century, some time after Kane's Defeat (late in the 20th century in the original Command & Conquer) and during the worst crisis in earth's history. The Tiberium plant, seen in the first game's scenario as a handy source of resources to combat the enemy, has now started to eat away the surface of the planet. The mysterious Tiberium originally came from space and there is no known way of stopping its onslaught. It's an extremely toxic substance and contact with it can lead to sickness, mutation and death – the only safe places on the planet are underground or at the polar extremes, where the cold slows down Tiberium's reproduction.

But GDI and NOD are not alone – there are many ordinary people on the planet who have been infected by the deadly Tiberium and these form a sort of third force called The Forgotten, led by a Mutant

CONQUERING THE CHARTS

Command & Conquer has had an illustrious history since its release in 1985 – a development of Westood's seminal real-time strategy game Dune II. Here are the releases for PC alone...

Command & Conquer (aka Tiberian Dawn) Gigantic terrorist organisation NOD takes on the organised, civilised world represented by the Global Defence Initiative in an all-out battle to control the amazing new resource, Tiberium. Refined Dune II user interface creates the de facto standard for real-time strategy games. Originally a DOS game, a Win95-specific version became available in 1997

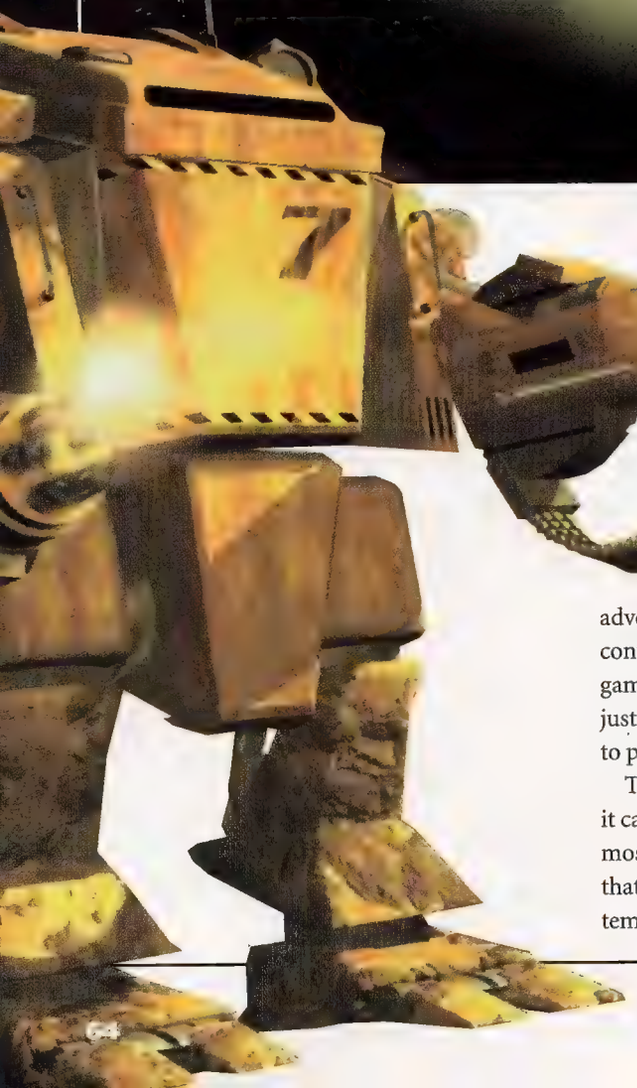
Command & Conquer: The Covert Operations Folks loved Command & Conquer so much they wanted more. Westwood gave it to them in the shape of this nifty add-on disk. New weapons, new missions

Command & Conquer: Red Alert George Lucas doesn't have a monopoly on prequels. Set a generation before NOD and GDI, Red Alert charts a war between the Reds and the Allies that could have happened if Uncle Joe Stalin and the West had continued fighting each other after the Second World War

Red Alert: Counterstrike & Red Alert The Aftermath Covert Operations-style add on disks for the eponymous Sov bashing game

Sole Survivor A small, tactical, mission-based, online-only version of the Command & Conquer universe, rarer than geese that lay golden eggs this side of the Atlantic, but a moderate success in the States which of course benefits from jammy, free local call deals and low-low ping rates

Below: Mech-style Powered Assault Armour units are likely to be upgradable into extremely powerful units.
Main: This pair of Recon Bikes demonstrates the quality of the cut scenes. Mmm...
Far right: New lighting effects and weapons



called Tratos. These folk are not exactly helpless fodder as they have armed themselves with the debris of previous wars and seem set to play a significant part in Tiberian Sun's plot, as allies, pawns and adversaries. Furthermore, Westwood has confirmed that aliens, too, will appear in the game – though that's all it will admit. We'll just have to wait and see what role they have to play.

Tiberium is not only unfriendly to humans, it causes havoc in the environment, too. The most noticable effect is frequent ion storms that can paralyse a region. These storms will temporarily disable certain types of high-tech units in their path – creating problems for player strategies. Ion storms have been created partly to cut down players' ability to use rush tactics – building up a large force and sending them on an overwhelming frontal assault. As well as disabling many units over a wide area, a direct hit from lightning in an ion storm will destroy individual units.

We don't have a final figure on new units and weapons, although Brett W Sperry, Tiberian Sun's Executive Producer and Westwood co-founder has said that they will be concentrating on quality, not necessarily massive quantity. Also, while Westwood has been pretty forthcoming about the sort of new weapons GDI has, NOD's advanced arsenal

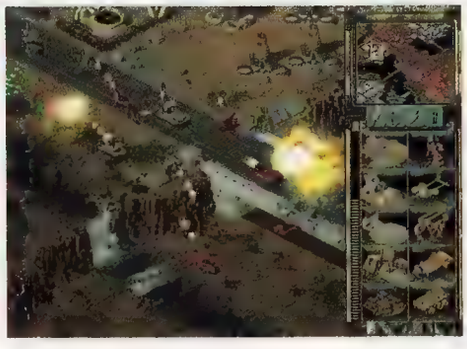
still remains somewhat of a mystery. What we do know is that the Orca range of aircraft used by GDI has been modified and now includes full player-controllable Orca Bombers as well as fighters, carry-alls and an armoured Orca Transport craft for delivering units to the battlefield or evacuating them.

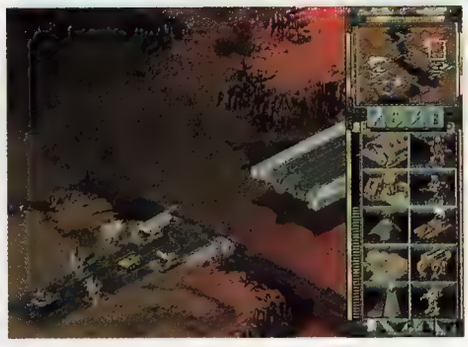
Foot soldiers include light units, grenadiers and highly mobile Jump Jet Infantry, while mech-style armoured walker units add 21st century spice to the game. A so-called Disruptor Tank has been added to the GDI arsenal, which sounds similar in concept to Dune 2000's Sonic Tank, but is immensely more powerful. It concentrates energy into bursts that will destroy vehicles and infantry alike, but it has a wide spread of fire and will just as easily disintegrate your own troops as the NOD in a close combat situation. Some hint that NOD's new weaponry may lie in the development of a mobile sonar unit to detect cloaked and underground units. A Mammoth II tank has also been hinted at and Tanya-style special units including cyborgs will be available .

One interesting addition to Tiberian Sun units is their ability to gain 'veteran' status. By destroying bigger opponents, experience points are automatically allocated which will increase an individual unit's effectiveness in areas such as speed, weapon range or firepower.

Base building will need stricter planning due to space restraints placed by the onslaught of Tiberium, and bases will become more interesting with the addition of search-lights, warning sirens and new defensive measures

Main: New-style APCs have amphibious capabilities and headlights that work! Below, left to right: A NOD base with Obelisks on full power, GDI base and a mined bridge





like the GDI's Firestorm force field. Searchlights will pick out approaching enemy vehicles and follow them until they are out of range or destroyed. When a searchlight is on an enemy vehicle, base defences will have a higher level of firepower and accuracy. Meanwhile, warning lights will flash and 'base alert!' announcements will ring out.

Missions will include the usual base-build, attack or defend scenarios, but plenty of smaller scale covert or guerilla operations will form an integral part of the plot's development. A random map generator will provide extra playability and multiplayer functionality – the latter allowing up to eight to play via an IPX LAN or the Internet. The scale of the action is much greater too, with maps up to twice the size of those seen in Red Alert. These will include temperate forest or arid landscapes as well as cityscape tilesets.

In between missions some of the best quality cut-scene movies will be used to set the scene, with actors of the calibre of James Earl Jones and Michael Biehn (Kyle Reese in The Terminator) playing GDI commanders.

Tiberian Sun's new 3D landscapes will significantly alter gameplay. Topography will affect factors such as weapon range and vehicle speed. Meanwhile water obstacles and Tiberium itself will affect where and how you can move armies. On the winter landscapes lakes will freeze to various degrees allowing some units to cross – but not all. As well as the usual natural landscape features, the post-apocalyptic feel of Tiberian Sun will be enhanced by the appearance of old, abandoned roads, partially destroyed buildings and remnants of old Command & Conquer sites.

Tiberian Sun is being designed to run on a Pentium 166 with 32Mb of RAM as a minimum specification. Its basic graphics mode is likely to be 640x480 in 16-bit colour (8-bit colour is unlikely to be supported) with a maximum resolution of 1024x768. It will not require any hardware acceleration, though according to Westwood an AGP graphics card will do it no harm.

So the stage is finally set for the return of Command & Conquer. We recently had a sneak peek at the game, one that demonstrated the lighting and terrain effects and showed off units like the Powered Assault Armour walkers, and it left us with a distinct feeling of anticipation. Westwood has big plans for this game, with the whole Command & Conquer series due to follow the likes of Wing Commander and Tomb Raider on to the big screen in the next few years. But, at the moment, all we want to do is play the finished game. Please don't make us wait any longer…

Alan Dykes

Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun
Developer: Westwood Studios
Label: Westwood Studios
Due: 2 April

CARMAGEDDON II

Some tips for the tougher missions

OUTBREAK

The infected loons are located in five spots as shown on your map (tab). Take the timber yard first (turn right at the start), collecting the pedestrian valium (essential) then flattening the three loons in the shed. Then make the jump across the river picking up the lunar gravity on the right hand lip. Don't jump too far – you only have a few seconds to land, hang a left and drive up the small hill to take out the lone loon. Now back along the riverfront to take out the three on the bridge, then past the start point and take out the group in the clinic. Then, finish with the group of 10 on the hill. Use the recovery key the instant you ram a loon over the precipice, and use the horn to make them freeze or throw themselves off in panic. Car choice? We've done this one in the Eagle, the Piledriver and the Cobra.

IN COLD BLOOD

Take this one slow. The Buggy is a good choice of car with plenty of grip. To get a flat trajectory off crucial jumps – ie to land on four wheels at least – a slow handbrake turn on the lip will send the car flat-spinning through the air. Smash the ice bears so you can shortcut through from checkpoint four and be on a straight run through the town and on to checkpoint five. Keep the jump through checkpoint six short as you need to be heading straight for the big jump.

CONTROL FREAK

You need a car heavy enough to smash the glass in the tower window, but light enough to make the jump without an excessive run up. Take the car to the jump point, reverse and get properly aligned, then wait a few seconds. This way when you hit the recovery key (if you overshoot or fall short) you come back ready to jump again. The Porker is a winner on this one, but you'll still need to hit the glass at least twice.

HARDCORE

Pick a route round the deck guns that picks up the granite power-ups. Collect the slaughter mortars by the control tower, then drop down the lift and take out the near side guns using the granite power-up in front of them. There should be time to take the opposite guns out too. Now head down to the lift, braking hard and turning 180 degrees as you hit it. Head straight on, and to the left of the core (through the glass) is another granite as well as an invulnerability in front of the core. Ram the core then race back to the lifts. Collect the ped annihilator by the slaughter mortars, pop round the back of the control tower and start kangarooing. The annihilator will take out the admiral.

OIL BE BLOWN

Race anti-clockwise, remembering that the first well is hidden by the car on your map (bottom left). Any fast car with reasonable handling will do.

THE BRUISE BROTHERS

Use the Eagle and make sure you've got it APO'd to the limit. There's a granite power-up on the garage roof, and a kangaroo power-up behind your start point. Use the granite and forward/reverse shunt all-comers. A car against a wall only needs a mild tap. Be careful with the pinball power-up or your opponents will be spread all over the map. Head-on shunts are vital, and don't be afraid to use the recovery key. Try to avoid shunts near water as this will put the cops out of your reach for a while.

Elvis Bacon

CHEATS

Type these while playing to get the relevant power-up:

WATERSPORT:
Underwater ability
LEMMINGIZE:
Stupid pedestrians
STIFFSPASMS:
Mutant corpses
SMARTBASTARD:
Completes the race
BIGDANGLE:
Mutant tail thing
WETWET:
Credit bonus

GRIM FANDANGO

Getting to Rubacava

HINTS & TIPS

Making your way through the Petrified Forest is no easy task, although it'll be a lot easier with the help of your trusty mechanic and chauffeur, Glottis.

Glottis, however, has managed to incapacitate himself after tearing out his heart and throwing it away in a tantrum. Unfortunately it is now stuck in a spider's web – you need to get it out.

First, pick up a bone from the pile nearby, and use it on the web. Then use your scythe on the bone, and this will lever the heart out so that you can give it back to Glottis. Take a few more bones from the pile for good measure – you'll need them later.

Once Glottis is revived, he will get in his car and run into the signpost, which you can then pick up. Take it and walk left into the clearing which has lots of exits. Plant it in the ground. It will then point in a particular direction. It isn't pointing at an exit, but at a spot in the middle of the clearing. No matter where you plant it, it always points there. Once you plant it in the right spot, a trap door will open. You can then return to the car and Glottis will drive you down to the next level.

The problem is once you're down there, there you'll find your way is blocked by fallen rocks. You need to return to the upper level of the forest and find the Tree Pump, which is in another clearing off the main area. Glottis notices that the pumps on the tree would make great shock absorbers for the Bone Wagon, enabling you to clear those rocks. To get them, you must unbalance the tree.

There's a wheelbarrow full of weights which you can move over the pneumatic tubes which power the pump. By moving the wheelbarrow on and off the tubes, you can change the order in which the pumps move. To unbalance the tree, you must make the pumps on one side of the tree pump together. Then turn the harmonic balancer switch. Glottis will climb the tree to rearrange the weights: when he does that, turn the power back on and the tree will shake itself to bits. Now Glottis has his shocks.

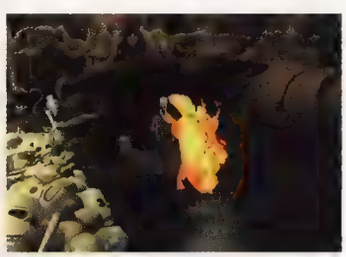
Return back down to the Beaver Dam area. The trick is to get past those demonic beavers, since they want your bones for their dam. When you get to the dam screen, walk left to the rocky outcrop. Stand there and toss a bone into the water. As the fiery beaver leaps off the rock to retrieve it, blast him with your fire extinguisher so that he freezes and sinks into the river. Repeat the process until all the beavers are gone (you will have to fetch more bones if you run out).

Now you are free to drive to Rubacava.

Cal Jones

Save Glottis' heart from the web

Nice hot beavers...



...Time to put them out

in the Creative dimension, you don't just hear sound, you know where it's coming from

Imagine a place where games are so lifelike that it's hard to tell fantasy from reality. Imagine a place where the latest sound card and speaker technologies combine to deliver Environmental Audio - a new standard of accuracy and vitality in 3D sound.

Stop imagining. Enter the Creative dimension whenever you see the Creative name.

Your PC will never be the same again.

Call 01245 265 265 for more information.

Sound Blaster Live and FourPointSurround speakers feature Environmental Audio which delivers:

- Exceptional sonic clarity that is so lifelike, it feels like it is being played live
- Accurate 3D sound positioning and full Surround Sound support
- Realistic audio 'environments' that make the latest 3D games come to life
- Studio quality audio processing that takes PC music to a new level

Visit your local dealer or our website for more details.

CREATIVE

Your PC's key to another dimension

WWW.SOUNDBLASTER.COM

Sound Cards | Graphics Cards | Speakers | PC-DVD | Video

REVIEWS

HOW DOES THE PCGW REVIEWS RATING SYSTEM WORK?

★★★★★	***Classic.*** A rare, near perfect game. The graphics, sound and gameplay together form a Transcendent Gaming Experience! Our strongest buying recommendation
★★★★	***Very Good.*** A high quality game that succeeds in many areas. Still very much worth your money, especially if you are interested in the subject matter or the genre
★★★	***Good.*** Generally a good gaming experience. May exhibit minor imperfections, but still a successful development. With flawed innovation or lack of originality. Buy if subject or genre particularly appeal
★★	***Average.*** A mixed bag. A game with problems – usually lacking in gameplay or suffering from ill-conceived game design. You should think carefully before buying it
★	***Poor.*** The rare game that gets it all wrong. This is reserved for those products so ill-conceived or valueless that you wonder why they were ever released in the first place

HOW DO WE CLASSIFY GAMES?

At PC Gaming World we classify reviews by the following genres. We do this to make navigating the magazine easier and also because we use specialist reviewers for each type of game – to ensure both accuracy and authority of our verdicts.

ACTION: The emphasis is on hand-eye coordination and reflexes, usually emphasising fast play or combat over story or strategy. Arcade- style driving games are also included here. *Begins page* ***78***

ADVENTURE AND ROLE PLAYING: Adventures include games where you control an alter ego and move through a storyline or sequence of events, where puzzle-solving takes precedence over combat. Roleplaying games (RPGs) are a sub-set of adventures, but stress character development, often through improving stats or other attributes. *Begins page* ***108***

CLASSICS AND PUZZLES: Classics are old standbys and parlour games that appeal to many different types of gamer – examples include backgammon, chess and bridge. Puzzle games emphasise spatial relationships, word games and/or problem solving – examples would be Zoop! and Tetris. *Begins page* ***90***

SPORTS: A broad genre that includes all manner of sports titles, including both action-oriented and strategy-based releases. *Begins page* ***102***

SIMULATION: Highly realistic games from a first-person perspective: you may drive a realistically simulated car, fly an aircraft with a meticulous physics model, or swoop through a detailed science-fiction environment. Usually polygon-filled technology is used to build the simulated world on the fly. *Begins page* ***70***

STRATEGY & WARGAMING: Strategy games involve problem-solving and both short- and long-range planning. These titles almost always emphasise resource management and risk assessment – including titles like Master Of Orion or Sim City. Wargames are a sub-set of strategy games which recreate historical conflicts from a command perspective. They may be tactical, operational or strategic – and stress anything from logistics and fire-power to leadership. *Begins page* ***96***

WHAT IS OUR REVIEWS POLICY?

We review software that is either available to buy or will be available to buy at retail during the shelf life of the magazine issue. We believe the reader is best served by a reviews content that reflects currently-releasing titles – and not by so-called exclusive reviews of semi-finished product, set to appear often months after the review's publication. Our policy of reviewing current releases also means that – as far as humanly possible – we will review from the final copy of the game, enabling us to more accurately judge the playability of the boxed shop copy that you will buy.

IMPARTIAL REVIEWS The publishers of PC Gaming World (Ziff-Davis) are recognised the world over for the authority, accuracy and impartiality of their reviews. It is the main plank on which the reputation of ourselves and our other titles are built. It will not be compromised.

ALL GAMES ARE EQUAL AT THE REVIEW START NO favouritism for big-name publishers. The great game is king – whoever develops it. Wherever possible the better the score, the more space will be devoted to a game review.

FINISHED CODE We believe that you should read the experiences of reviewers who have played fully-featured Mastered code. We will continue to rank the importance of evaluating the actual game you will buy far above any concerns of striving for an 'exclusive' review.

THE MOST EXPERIENCED TEAM We will continue to develop the most experienced and authoritative panel of reviewers anywhere in the UK. Our current editorial team includes gaming experience averaging over eight years, and extends back as far as the Commodore PET.

VERDICTS We will never trade editorial favouritism or 'a good score' for an exclusive – either on the same product or as part of a package deal for future coverage of any other title or titles. Our verdicts and scores are sacrosanct.

MORE REVIEWS Our mission is to provide games buyers with the most comprehensive and accurate reviews picture of each month's new releases. We will strive to review every new PC game released. A tall order, perhaps, but we already review more games than anybody else – and we plan to continue and extend that policy.

TIMELY REVIEWS Wherever it is possible – without compromising the need to exhaustively playtest each title – we will strive to coincide publication of a game's review with its retail availability. We do not see any benefit in being first to review a game, four months before anyone can buy it.

SPECIALIST REVIEWERS We will continue to have the most knowledgeable specialist reviewers. We get flight sim fans to review flight sims, Quake fans to review Quake packs...

WHAT DOES THE SYSTEMS REQUIREMENTS BOX DO?

For each review we include systems requirements information detailing the equipment you will need for the game to run efficiently. We recognise that our readers have a wide range of differently specified PCs and we want readers to be aware of the minimum recommended hardware configuration and operating systems for each game to run effectively. We also recognise the increasing importance of network and online multiplayer capabilities.

Age Rating. Shows the age suitability of the program (either ELSPA or BBFC classification)
Installation. Lists the operating systems and the minimum versions required by the game – ie DOS 5.0 or better or Win95
Minimum PC. Shows the minimum processor and processor speed required to run the game successfully – ie 486 66MHz or Pentium 75
Minimum RAM. Indicates the minimum system memory required to run the game
CD. The minimum speed CD required – eg quad speed ***Graphics.*** The graphics modes required – ie VGA or SVGA
Sound. Details the sound cards with which the game can be configured – ie SoundBlaster or Windows compatible
Control. Shows devices available for use to play the game – ie mouse, keyboard, joystick or joypad
Advanced Graphics Support. Is it compatible with any 3D technology – MMX, D3D or other individual native card support?

We take considerable care to ensure that the system requirement information we publish is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of press. However, we cannot be responsible for any loss or damage resulting from any inaccuracies in the information provided.

Ultra

Futuristic furballs

LABEL: Interactive Magic
TELEPHONE: 01344 409399
WEB: www.imagicgames.com
DEVELOPER: Eagle Interactive
PRICE: £29.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-8 (2 via serial link or modem, 2-8 via IPX/LAN, Internet or I-Magic Online's server)
DIFFICULTY: Easy
AGE RATING: ELSPA 11+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P166 **Minimum RAM** 32Mb **CD** Quad-speed **Graphics** 4Mb 3D hardware accelerated **Sound** DirectX compatible **Control** Keyboard, mouse, joystick **Advanced Graphics Support** D3D

I've heard a terrifying rumour that leaded petrol is to be phased out by 2000. Great news for the planet, but my beloved 2.8 Capri guzzles a gallon every 16 miles or so. Come the millennium I'll be reduced to scavenging for supplies Mad Max style. According to Ultra Fighters, this time next century the rest of the world will know exactly how I feel.

A cataclysmic Third World War has decimated global populations and rendered fossil fuel reserves unusable. Fortunately some bright spark's discovered an energy magnifying wonderstuff called Thermodux. The bad news is that the evil Zindo Empire has cornered the market by capturing the only supply. Your role as a US-backed mercenary pilot is liberate this priceless stash.

Ready to launch on the Bakerloo Line

Fighters

It's all quite straightforward in the Ultra Fighters office

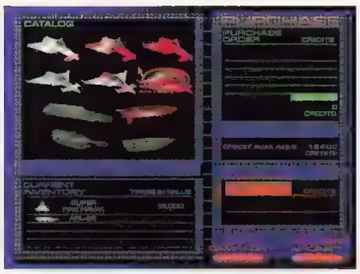
What ensues is a curious mix of space-age technology and traditional dogfighting action. The single-player game involves purging the Solomon Islands of Zindo forces in nine brief linear campaigns totalling around 25 missions. You start off in a bog-standard Tiger Hawk electric jet. Successful sorties provide credits to purchase extra weapons and save up for cooler ships (there are eight to choose from). Ultra Fighters aircraft don't bear much resemblance to real planes, but they all handle more or less conventionally. As they rely solely on electric power during combat, astute energy management between thrust and lasers is essential.

Flights begin with a *Battlestar Galactica*-style blast up the launch tube. But instead of emerging into the vast vacuum of space you pop out blinking into bright sunshine. The Ultra Fighters map is a small but plausibly formed recreation of the Solomons, compete with lush hills that rolled smoothly by on my 300MHz PII.

Objectives vary from combat air patrols to pinpoint strikes on enemy installations. Several allied planes often accompany you, and a useful 'formation augmentation' autopilot makes up for the lack of wingman commands.

Ultra Fighters is surprisingly enjoyable as a single-player experience and has real promise as a multiplayer game. At the time of writing Interactive Magic Online is about to launch an Ultra Fighters arena. This should allow budding eco-warriors to duke it out for an hour or so for less than the price of a gallon of four-star.

Rowan Jackson



The equipment upgrade screen. You pays yer credits, you takes yer choice

PROS: An interesting slant on the flight sim theme. Easy to learn and the option to switch planes and armament for specific missions is a nice touch

CONS: Short campaigns limit scope of single player game. Graphics surpassed by most current front-runners

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★

Are seasonal sales more important than catering for dedicated gamers?

Well, the ethereal enigma that was Falcon 4 has finally touched down with a hefty thump. To avoid the vagaries of the Yuletide post I went out and bought my copy from a High Street games store, parting with my 35 quid in a childlike rush of excitement. Remember – us simmers have waited Eight Long Years for a new addition to the Falcon family. In fact if the in-store sales chart is to be believed, hundreds if not thousands of Falcon faithful snapped up the exact same version within days of its release.

Most will have experienced the same wonder at the weight of that stylishly simple box, swallowed similarly hard at the sight of the awesome manual and been equally gobsmacked by those glorious graphics. Without a doubt the sim world has a new benchmark for amazing visuals, flight model and sheer technical brilliance. But after that wow factor's waned, how many of those same gamers will feel able to tolerate Falcon 4's less endearing habits – like its propensity to crash when you eject. Or forcing you to restart your computer during campaigns to free up memory. Or even the sight of your wingman taking off into the sunset without you never to return.

It soon becomes apparent that the initial release of Falcon 4 is literally teeming with bugs (the patch on our cover CD addresses no less than 37 of them). And we're not just talking tiny little critters either. Some of these are ruddy great Starship-Troopers-style monsters that any decent playtester should have spotted spot a mile off.

True, picking up a patch from a cover CD or Web site is nothing more than a minor irritation for most folk. But parting with cash for an unfinished game still leaves me feeling cheated. And that's not to mention the plight of UK gamers who don't yet have access to the Internet. We've covered this thorny issue before in these pages, but it obviously needs saying again: it's simply not fair to treat loyal gamers as beta testers – and expect them to pay for the privilege.

Right, that's the moaning out of the way, so there's just time to have a look at the rest of this section's hot property. Jane's WWII Fighters just missed out on last month's issue, but as you can see it was well worth the wait. The campaigns may lack depth, but it's certainly the best-looking Second World War sim we've seen – essential kit for retro simmers with a flashy 3D card. It's a shame the same can't be said of Combat Pilot No1 (Attack Squadron). It's definitely a missed opportunity for the first add-on to MS Combat Flight Sim.

At the other end of the time scale, I-Magic's Ultra Fighters was this month's surprise discovery. To be honest we weren't expecting great things, but it just goes to show how clever ideas and silky smooth gameplay can sometimes make up for a lack of cutting edge features. Should be a real hoot to play online too.

Rowan Jackson

Comments or questions on sims? Write to Rowan or email him on pcgw_mail@zd.com

WWII Fighters

Luxurious eye candy at 30fps

LABEL: Jane's Combat Simulations

TELEPHONE: 01753 549442

WEB: www.janes.ea.com

DEVELOPER: In-house

PRICE: £39.99

NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-8 (2-8 via Internet, LAN, modem and null modem)

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RATING: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P200 **Minimum RAM** 32Mb **CD** Quad-speed **Graphics** 3D accelerator required **Sound** DirectX-compatible **Control** Keyboard, mouse, joystick, throttles and rudder pedals **Advanced Graphics Support** D3D, Glide

Chicken tonight: Will you stick to your guns or go out with a bang?

WWII Fighters from Jane's dives out of the sun to shred MS Combat Flight Simulator and European Air War with the most startling graphics yet seen. For this 3D-accelerator-only title makes no compromises in terms of aircraft detailing and effects. Translucent, 3D clouds have never looked fluffier, and you can almost feel the moisture as you fly through them. The planes are intimately detailed, look worn in and are of true cinematic quality. Little touches like shell casings and pneumatic wheels that slowly turn in the airstream make all of the difference.

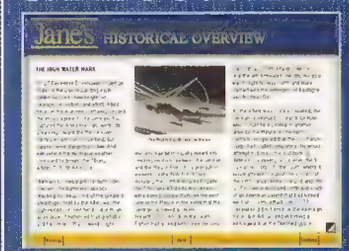
Titles such as F-22: Total Air War look splendid, but Jane's has lifted the genre to another level that makes full use of the latest hardware, be it Voodoo 2, TNT or G200-based. The steep hardware requirements and initial worries fostered by the sluggishness of the demo can be dismissed – on a Celeron 300A the game runs perfectly at 800x600. Unlike F15, resolutions as high as your card can go are supported, and in glorious 32-bit colour for anyone with a top-end PC.

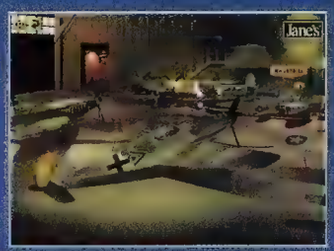
Not only are the exterior views magnificent, but the cockpit interiors are equally impressive. Static aircraft panels give way to detail, and the surrounding cockpit structure helps make padlock views less disorienting. Individual instruments can be damaged in battle, with charred wires hanging out of the dashboard like a hot-wired car.

The landscape, however, is bleak in comparison. A brown and muddy Belgium provides the backdrop for the Ardennes campaign, popularly known as the Battle of the Bulge. While towns, roads and rivers look convincing, the overall snowy landscape feels lifeless compared with the exquisite patchwork of MS Combat Flight Simulator and European Air War.

Hitler's counter-offensive during Christmas 1944 must be fought out in a tree-based campaign, with the option of flying Allied or Axis aircraft. The seven planes on offer include the Lightning, Mustang, Thunderbolt, Spitfire, Me 109, Fw 190 and infamous Me 262A jet fighter. As we have come to expect from Jane's, a wealth of information is available for all of these aircraft.

JANE'S JOURNAL





An in-depth multimedia history archive featuring men, machines and classic footage of the era, including a detailed account of the Ardennes campaign

Right: The detail shown in this render of a Spitfire cockpit is somewhat fab. Above top: Photo-realistic planes, complete with shell casings falling away and that dirty look. Above: The mighty P-38 unleashes some deadly rockets against a fluffy cloud backdrop

Photos, technical details, 3D renderings and videos are available, together with the ability to test fly each masterpiece before heading into battle.

One of the nicest features of WWII aircraft is their simplicity compared with modern fighters. Even novices can be up and flying in seconds, instinctively dogfighting without having to learn several dozen keystrokes. Controls have been simplified, compared with the utter realism of MS Combat Flight Simulator, with the focus clearly on action. As with all WWII sims a set of rudder pedals is a real tactical advantage.

The flight models feel nice, with a good deal of variety between the different aircraft, though here it lacks the depth of either Combat Flight Simulator or European Air War. The option to fly the Me 262 is welcome and requires honing of the distinctive slash-and-run attack, characteristic of this beast. Ground attack is a somewhat haphazard affair though – you may pine for laser-guided Paveways and Maverick missiles.

A few training missions are supplied, together with a quick mission generator. Several single missions are included, covering the usual air and ground attack sorties based around the Wintry Wacht am Rhein campaign. A comprehensive mission editor provides longevity, and Jane's Web site features an upload/download area for creative endeavours and is already filling up.

The campaign itself is an interesting scenario with the German forces making a break for Antwerp before the Allies deal the final blow. The timing of the offensive was partly determined by poor weather, a real advantage for the Axis forces who were sheltered from air attack. Sorties for the Allies are initially small affairs, but once the weather clears during the campaign, then the mighty 8th Air Force with B-17s can enter the fray.

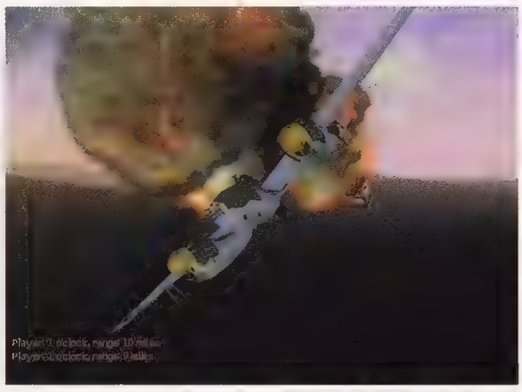
Archive film footage and cut-scenes with rolling text commentary set the tone every few missions, with the briefings themselves being very matter of fact. A disappointment is that your success or failure has little bearing on future missions, taking away from the somewhat immersive experience.

The WWII Fighters team has succeeded in producing an awe-inspiring graphical masterpiece. A real problem is that it's tempting to cycle through the external views without even bothering to fly the plane.

Hardcore simmers will prefer MS Combat Flight Simulator for its depth and expandability. But for those who just want serious wingtip to wingtip action, WWII Fighters is a joy to behold.

Kenji Takeda

Suddenly, steering became a concern...



Effects to make Industrial Light & Magic jealous

PROS: The first truly cinematic flight simulator. The planes look spectacular, inside and out, and the cloud effects are stunning

CONS: Only a single, tree-based campaign over rather bland countryside. Flight modelling not up there with MS Combat Flight Simulator and no Force Feedback support

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★ ★

Combat Pilot No. 1 (Attack) Squadron

Not for the faint-hearted

Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator has seen no little chart action since its release, partly due to the continued support for third-party developers. Especially now that Bill's minions have released mission and damage profile editors for it.

First out of the hangar is Combat Pilot No 1 (Attack) Squadron from The Associates, which adds seven aircraft types: the P51B, P38J, Typhoon, Piper L4, Ju 87 Stuka, V1 and Me 163.

The concise, but historically rich manual includes copious details of each type and installation is a snap. Each aircraft has been modelled carefully, both graphically and dynamically. They look authentic externally and have detailed panels, and unique new sounds. A major drawback is that the padlock views do not work correctly, so if your combat style requires these then steer clear. These seven aircraft certainly cover the range of handling characteristics, from the slothful Piper to the transonic Me 163 Komet.

Unfortunately no new missions are included which use these aircraft. They are also not automatically installed as opponents in Quick Combat – the \QuickCom\qc_plane.qcb file must be hacked to enable this. The Combat Flight Simulator Web site, however, has the details.

Kenji Takeda

The Doodlebug is neat, but you'll have to create your own missions for it

ESSENTIALS:
The Associates, 01494 511103, £19.99, 1-8 players (2-8 via serial link, modem, LAN or Internet), Keyboard, mouse, joystick, throttles and rudder pedals, Force Feedback Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 (requires MS Combat Flight Simulator) Minimum PC: P133, 16Mb RAM, Quad-speed CD, SVGA, SoundBlaster-compatibles, Advanced Graphics Support: D3D

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★

Concorde

If looks could thrill...

Without doubt the most beautiful man-made creation to grace the skies is the BAC/Aerospatiale Concorde. It is living proof that engineering necessity and aesthetics are not mutually exclusive, and it is many a pilot's dream to fly one.

FlightSim Developers has strived to create the definitive Concorde experience and includes a 104-minute video to help you get in the mood. Fronted by a BA Concorde captain, this dry documentary goes through all of the procedures and checklists for the supersonic flight between Heathrow and JFK.

Flying the world's most alluring airliner is a real challenge. The flight model feels rather different from more run-of-the-mill aircraft and has been validated by real pilots.

The legendary silhouette is recreated admirably, complete with smoothly animated landing gear, control surfaces and the infamous drooping nose.

The cockpit panel is well-crafted, with every gauge and instrument faithfully reproduced. A comprehensive manual is included and two thorough tutorial adventures. These take you from pushback and taxiing through to supersonic cruise/climb, descent and final approach at the other end. There are also two adventures for the London to JFK route, with full Air Traffic Control in authentic British and East Coast accents.

Watching the video reveals how remarkably accurate the add-on is. But at £25 it's an expensive single-aircraft addition for those without a genuine soft-spot for Concorde.

Kenji Takeda

The world's favourite airplane, in 13 liveries from BA to Singapore Airlines

ESSENTIALS:
The Associates, 01494 511103, £24.99, 1-8 players (2-8 via modem, serial link or LAN), Keyboard, mouse, joystick Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 (requires MS Flight Simulator 98), Minimum PC: P133, 16Mb RAM, Dual-speed CD, SVGA, Soundblaster compatibles, Advanced Graphics Support: MMX, D3D

DIFFICULTY: Advanced

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★

African Safari

Land Rovers are optional

Making a welcome break from the usual urban settings preferred by Microsoft Flight Simulator add-on designers, Degenhard, Korner and Hinsch have bravely attempted to recreate the wilds of Africa and all its natural beauty.

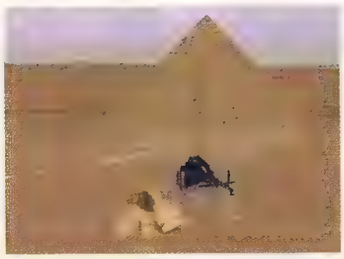
The coverage is comprehensive, totalling 25,000 square kilometres with rivers, roads and railtracks all accounted for, together with 70 airstrips to fly from. The 11 international airports including Johannesburg, Nairobi and Cape Town are skilfully detailed, teeming with landing lights for adventurous night flyers.

While the man-made features are of good quality, it is the wildlife that is of real interest. There are no preset flights or adventures, but plenty of rough airstrips exist to enable enjoyable safari flying. Taking off from Lake Lgarya airfield and flying over the Serengeti grasslands reveals herds of animals grazing. Well, cardboard cutouts of antelopes, zebras and giraffes. Buzzing over these tableaux does not herald a response, and the wildebeest prefer not to sweep majestically. However, from a moderate distance the effect is plausible. The Pyramids West of Cairo present an interesting adventure, with lovely texturing and the only fully 3D animal model in this expansion pack – the Sphinx.

A herd of wildebeest sweeps majestically across the African plain – almost

For those waiting for a good representation of African airstrips with navaids to practice their cross-country flying, this is a good choice. But if you want to see realistic wildlife, start saving for the real Safari experience.

Kenji Takeda



Microsoft Flight Simulator will take you there, but it's not the same

ESSENTIALS:

Data Becker 01420 22707, £19.99, 1 player, Keyboard, joystick, mouse
Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

Installation: Win95/Win98, requires MS Flight Simulator Minimum PC: P133, 16Mb RAM, Dual-speed CD, SVGA, SoundBlaster compatibles, Advanced Graphics Support: MMX, D3D

DIFFICULTY: Advanced

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★

DISCOVER

...a virgin planet for man's descendants to populate.

SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI

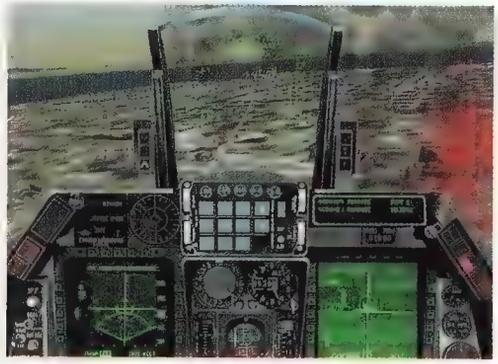
PC CD

FIRAXIS GAMES

ELECTRONIC ARTS™

©1998 Electronic Arts. Electronic Arts and the Electronic Arts logo are trademarks or registered trademarks in the US and/or other countries. All rights reserved. Alpha Centauri and Firaxis Games are trademarks of Firaxis Games, Inc.

Falcon 4.0



Finally...the Falcon has landed

LABEL: MicroProse
TELEPHONE: 01454 893893
WEB: www.microprose.com
DEVELOPER: In-house
PRICE: £34.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-8 (2 via serial link or modem, 2-8 via LAN, modem or Internet)
DIFFICULTY: Advanced
AGE RATING: ELSPA 11+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P166 **Minimum RAM** 32Mb **CD** Quad speed **Graphics** 16-bit colour **Sound** DirectX-compatible **Control** Keyboard, mouse, joystick **Advanced Graphics Support** MMX, D3D, 3Dfx (Glide)

Lovely isn't she? But you'll need at least a 266MHz PII to get the best out of this baby

A serious sim deserves a serious manual and at well over 300 pages, Falcon 4's inch-thick tome represents the very pinnacle of seriousness. The best part of a decade in the making, MicroProse's new monster recreates the block 50/52 F-16C as painstakingly as the US government will allow. I spent days reading up on the finer points of 'Max G turns at corner airspeed' and 'deep stall recovery techniques' before I finally felt ready to take to the air in earnest.

For eager beavers the relaxed realism of Instant Action cuts straight to the chase, but to get the best from this title it's worth tackling the 31 'tactical engagements' which form Falcon 4's military-style training syllabus. This is also a good time to get used to the nifty ACMI (Air Combat Manoeuvring instrumentation) feature that can record every aspect of flights for later analysis.

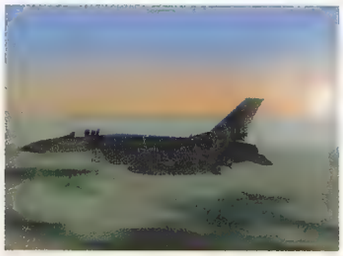
As soon as the first mission loads and you take a look at your surroundings it's obvious that Falcon 4.0 is a tad special on the graphics front. On my 300MHz Pentium II with 64Mb RAM and Techworks Voodoo 2 SLI combo the game ran super smoothly at 800x600 during the training missions. With the detail levels pegged around half-mast I whizzed over the most realistic PC terrain I've seen. With DirectX 6 drivers installed, I actually found the game ran better under D3D than Glide (options for both are included). Soon after wheels-up I was chucking my Falcon around the sky with abandon and making good use of the extensive outside views. Light sourcing, shadows, moveable controls – it's all there.

From the first tentative taxi to full afterburner combat manoeuvres the flight model feels utterly brilliant too. Unfortunately I can't say how close it gets to the real thing, but it's been designed with the help of F-16 instructor pilot Pete 'Boomer' Bonanni so heck, if it's good enough for him...!

Every non-classified button that exists in an F-16 is present and clickable in the fully active cockpit. To help keep your eyes on the prize during combat, a slick virtual cockpit and assorted padlock views pan swiftly and include handy direction references inside the canopy (you even get instrument reflections if your machine can handle them). But this Falcon doesn't just look the part. Almost every sound an F-16 makes has been sampled including engine noise, cockpit switches and excellent spoken air traffic control.

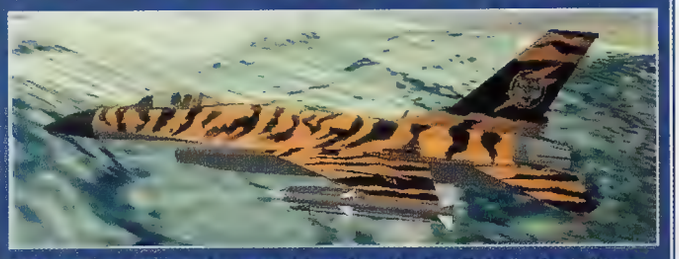
Once you've mastered a few shaky landings, it's back to class for advanced training in navigation, wingman control, and the inevitable fighting talk. At the sharp end players can fire or drop most everything that the real plane can carry including AMRAAM and Sidewinder

MiG roll anyone?



The sun sets on another mission

THE UNITED COLOURS OF FALCON



For some up-close and personal jousting, the Dogfight option allows players to test their mettle against a broad selection of human or computer adversaries flying alone or as part of a team. You can even specify fancy paint jobs including a fantastic shark livery complete with toothy grin or full-body tiger camouflage. For a more cerebral challenge, players can create multiplayer engagements using the mission builder or wage multiplayer campaigns over LAN or the Internet

missiles, napalm, assorted cluster bombs and three versions of Maverick missile. A novel 'freeze' function buys befuddled pilots extra thinking time by pausing the on-screen action while allowing the displays and cockpit switches to continue functioning. Reduced realism modes for the flight model, radar and devilishly difficult air-to-air refuelling further ease the strain.

Finally, as you smoke your tyres on touchdown after the last training sortie, it's time to face some real live opposition. The volatile Korean peninsular plays host to Falcon 4's much vaunted dynamic campaign system. A choice of three separate crises, each with fully adjustable difficulty levels provides a stream of varied computer-generated missions covering every conceivable role the F-16 can fulfil. From close air support to tactical recon, deep strike or air superiority, the outcome of each affects the course of the war. Players have control over all aspects of planning including crew choice, weapon loadouts and routing. With an almost limitless target list and fully adjustable AI levels for adversaries from humble prop planes to SAM's and lethal MiG-29s it sounds like a passport to simming heaven.

So get ready for a shock, then, because this is where Falcon 4.0 becomes too clever for its own good. Calculating the paths of countless aircraft and the constantly shifting ground war hit my poor processor so hard that the game became virtually unplayable.

Reducing the detail and switching resolutions to 640x480 improved matters, but the detriment was far more pronounced than I ever experienced with DiD's Total Air War's similarly complex campaign structure. Worse still, during the first few hours of play I had to reboot my machine countless times after terminal lock-ups. Eventually MicroProse's Web site provided the answer in the shape of a gigantic patch.

For the fantastic visuals and as a fascinating insight into the secret world of the F-16 pilot, Falcon 4 is worth its weight in gold. But for my money the creaky campaign engine and some truly unforgivable bugs deny it the status of classic.

Rowan Jackson

PROS: The most realistic F-16 sim money can buy with the best graphics and flight model in the business

CONS: Awesomely complex and unforgivably buggy. Forget the campaigns if you don't have a scorchingly fast PC

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★ ★

Top Gun: Hornet's Nest

Mission improbable

Nothing too complicated here. The fire button's usually all you need

More than a decade after Tom Cruise saved the world and got the girl, Maverick, the supersonic tearaway is back having traded in his trusty F-14 Tomcat in for a souped-up F-18 Hornet. Top Gun: Hornet's Nest casts players in the starring role during 30 gung-ho missions spread across three campaigns in Columbia, Iraq and Siberia.

Take a hefty manual into the shower? Not according to the blurb on the box: you simply 'kick the tyres, light the fires and go'. To complete a mission (there are 10 in each scenario, to be completed in order) it's usually just a case of taking off and blasting anything remotely Soviet.

Each successful sortie adds a new chapter to the fanciful storyline bound together by mediocre FMV cut-scenes. Unsurprisingly Mr Cruise fails to make an appearance, but original *Top Gun* actor James Tolkan's career takes a nose-dive as he features in most of them.

If the action were fast and fun, Hornet's Nest might still provide an interesting diversion for mainstream simmers. But the sharp polygonal landscape and less-than-fluid frame rate (even my PII 300 with Voodoo 2 SLI combo struggled) make the game look as dated as its licence.

If copious cut-scenes are your bag, Jet Fighter: Full Burn offers four CDs' worth plus a vastly superior graphics engine. But for my thirty-quid Top Gun experience, I'd prefer to rent the film on video and spend the change on beer.

Rowan Jackson

ESSENTIALS:
MicroProse, 01454 893893, £29.99, 1-8 players (2-8 via LAN or Internet), keyboard, mouse, joystick
Age Rating: ELSPA 11+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98, Minimum PC: P166, 32Mb RAM, Quad-speed CD, 2Mb SVGA graphics, DirectX-compatible soundcards, Advanced Graphics Support: D3D, 3Dfx

DIFFICULTY: Easy

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★

From Fiona the Fairy to Barbie and back. It's been a tough month

So it's going to be a quiet year? I think not. As the New Year kicks off in suitably gory fashion with the Bambi-bashing spoof Natural Fawn Killers (the real crime lies in the fact that it only takes an hour or so to complete), moves swiftly on to Blood II: The Chosen, hacks its way through Limb By Limb, develops S.C.A.R.S along the way and culminates with the utter depravity of the gore splattered Barbie Riding Club (subtitled The Glue Factory Massacre)... I think I see a pattern developing.

Having spent much of last year bemoaning the complete lack of quality beat 'em-ups and genuine platform games, it is sheer bliss to be able to welcome back that ever-flatulent Mudokon, Abe. Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus is an object lesson in how to deliver an inventive, challenging and thoroughly amusing platform game with exactly the right balance between puzzles and reflexes. It still doesn't help with the beat 'em-up problem, but at least it has taken my mind off the matter for a good few hours. And then some.

Elsewhere this month, Ashgan really delivers first-rate goods with an excellent fantasy take on Tomb Raider and Deathtrap Dungeon's action-adventure turf only slightly spoiled by a hackneyed swords 'n' sorcery plot and the presence of Fiona the Fairy... Among others, you'll also find Star Wars: Rogue Squadron (disappointing), plus classy high-speed action in Viper Racing and the first gear lumberings of Test Drive 4x4.

Blood II is particularly disappointing given the technological promise that Monolith's Lithtech engine shows in the game and also in Shogo: Mobile Armor Division. For some bizarre reason Blood II lacks the bite and the atmosphere of its predecessor, and is a perfect example of why – in this Half-Life era – artificial intelligence really needs to be more than a token effort if an action game is going to make the grade.

● Now that BT has seen the light (and my £500 cheque) I've got a phone line at home again. With a standard 56kbps Pace modem, untweaked, I'm getting a solid 120-140 ping on all the usual servers. Day and night. The secret is the ISP and that, I'm afraid, will stay a secret. All I'll say is it's a well-known name, considered extremely naff by gamers and thus unsaturated with data from thousands of happy fraggers. Think about it.

Lastly, a personal plea. If you're buying one of the many new sub-£1,000 PCs, please forget about the tasty games bundle and actually look at key components like the processor and particularly the video card – because the nice salesman will cut corners wherever he can and its almost always at the expense of game-playing capabilities. Having spent most of Christmas bailing out friends with brand new – but running like a dog – PCs, I can only say that I never want to see another poxy ATi Rage Pro 2D/3D chipset again.

John Bennett (aka Elvis Bacon)

Comments or questions on action games? Write to John or email him on elvis_bacon@zd.com

Star Wars: Rogue Squadron

Luke walks again...

Red sky in the morning, X-Winger's warning...

Last year, LucasArts released Shadows Of The Empire – a sort of cross between the flight-sim-in-space complexity of X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter and the pre-rendered eye candy of the Rebel Assault series (with a bit of Dark Forces thrown in). It wasn't very good: it looked nice enough, but the missions were linear and very dull.

In Rogue Squadron, LucasArts has ditched the running round bits in favour of straight shoot 'em-up action in a variety of craft – from the dinky snow-speeder to the cool X-Wing and the brand new V-Wing.

To add to the fun, you get to play Luke Skywalker, heading the same band of Rebels who led the attack on the Death Star at the end of A New Hope (minus the dead ones, of course).

Left a bit, right a bit...

It looks great – in high-res D3D the intricately textured craft look superb. Unfortunately, again, LucasArts has failed to get the gameplay right. For a start, the missions are all self-contained so there's no story to draw you in. In spite of the addition of secondary goals and extra pick-ups the levels feel repetitive and bland, with little to encourage you to exceed the minimum mission goals. And with only 16 levels to tackle it won't take long to complete the whole game, with little incentive to play it again.

No doubt with the release of the new 'prequels' there will soon be a glut of *Star Wars*-inspired games – better than this, we hope.

Pat Fox

ESSENTIALS:
LucasArts, 01895 456700, £39.99
1 player, Keyboard, mouse, joystick
Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 Minimum PC P166, 32Mb RAM, Quad-speed CD, DirectX-compatible graphics and sound cards, Advanced Graphics Support: D3D required, 3Dfx, Glide

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★

Blood II: The Chosen

Gore blimey!

LABEL: GT Interactive
TELEPHONE: 0171 486 5099
WEB: www.gtgames.com
DEVELOPER: Monolith
PRICE: £34.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-32 (2-32 via LAN and Internet)
DIFFICULTY: Intermediate
AGE RATING: BBFC 18

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P166 (with D3D accelerator) P233 (without accelerator) **Minimum RAM** 32Mb **CD** Quad speed **Graphics** DirectX 6 compatible **Sound** Direct X compatible **Control** Joystick, mouse, keyboard **Advanced Graphics Support** D3D

Staff at the blood donor clinic had been pared to the bone

It's been 80-years since Caleb locked horns with his former cult-mates, the Cabal. In that time, the Cabal has been transformed into a multi-national corporation called the Cabalco (that's the free market economy for you) and Caleb's mate Gabriel – once short, white and dead – is now thin, black, female and alive. Go figure.

Miffed at one too many armed cultists invading his personal tube space, Caleb goes on the hunt for the Cabalco boss, Gideon. Now you come into the game, either as Caleb or one of his comrades – Gabriel(la), Ishmael or Ophelia. Each has different strength, speed and magical ability (the latter used to power the Voodoo doll and other arcane gadgets).

Between you and Gideon – a man always one lousy one-liner ahead – are 30 levels full of cultists, commandos and rocket-carrying bodyguards. Plus, and quite unreasonably so, the likes of fireballing Drudge Lords, air-borne Drudge Priests, bouncy Shikari and cheery Bone Leeches.

With an assortment of power-ups and over 20 weapons on offer you've at least got the means to express yourself. Interestingly though, you can only carry 10 weapons at once, so choosing which to drop and which to keep adds some strategy to the proceedings.

Visually, Blood II has bags of style. Monolith's new Lithtech engine shows real promise in the fancy lighting department with slick use of real-time shadows, coloured and dynamic lighting, mirror effects and so forth. The characters are well animated, there's lots of detail (spent cartridge cases and so on), and the cut-scenes move what plot there is along at a decent rate.

Unfortunately, the gameplay is just too predictable whichever way you approach it. The level design has you backtracking and searching for exits all too often, and the use of environmental damage to reveal new passages is done in an obvious, ham-fisted fashion. The positioning of the guards and monsters is equally unimaginative and – although they'll take a fair kicking before they lie down – their AI is so horrendously limited you won't face any great surprises. Just a long trek and a repetitive slug-fest.

That surprises me less than the lack of atmosphere and bite to the game. It certainly lacks the gothic spookiness of the original or the 'ouch, that's gotta hurt' comedy splat value you have every right to expect. The business of slicing 'n' dicing should really be done with wit, style and a bit of humour.

Blood II is a competent first person shooter built on a technologically impressive engine. But, it has neither the gameplay to compete with the definitive title of the genre – Half-Life – nor the character of its predecessor. In short, nothing to scream about.

Elvis Bacon

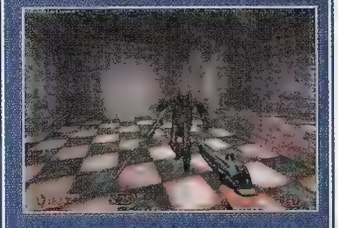
PROS: Eye candy rendered in gore, and plenty of it. Choice of four different characters to play and a massive arsenal for your amusement

CONS: Weak AI, unimaginative level design and gameplay that rarely varies – plus a surprising lack of atmosphere. Internet performance is slow

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★

BLOODBATHS



Blood has good Net play potential, although at the time of review there were few servers to be found and the code is pretty laggy. It could be fun after the usual patch-frenzy is over. Quite how the weapon balance will shake down after that is anybody's guess

Caleb never knew downtown graffiti artists could be such ugly customers

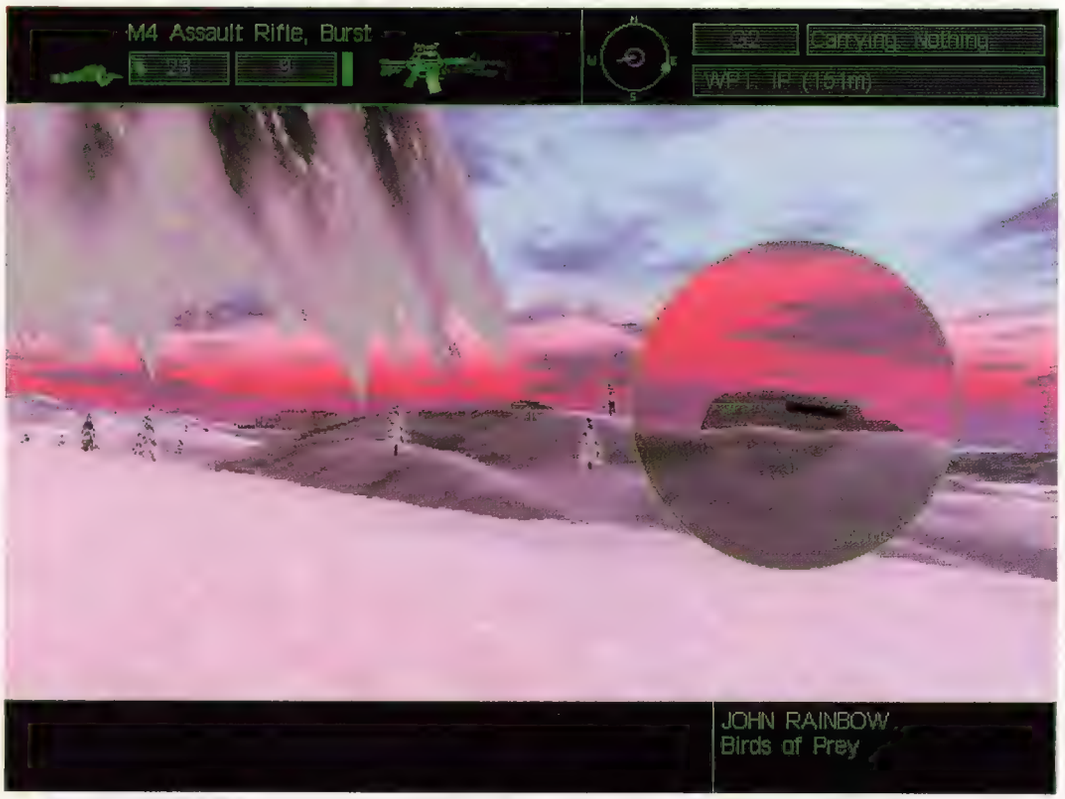
Delta Force

Get off your fat ass, Charlie Two!

LABEL: NovaLogic
TELEPHONE: 0171 405 1777
WEB: www.empire.co.uk
DEVELOPER: In-house
PRICE: £34.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-16 (2-16 via IPX LAN, Internet)
DIFFICULTY: Advanced
AGE RATING: ELSPA 15+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P166 **Minimum RAM** 16Mb **CD** Quad-speed **Graphics** SVGA **Sound** SoundBlaster and compatibles **Control** Keyboard, mouse **Advanced Graphics Support** None



Levels include winter, temperate, equatorial and desert scenes, with both night and day conditions

I don't play Quake II. I can see the attraction and understand the addiction, but it leaves me cold. In fact the entire first-person genre is no friend of mine – to date that is. Delta force has literally changed my perspective.

Somewhat similar in concept to Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six, Delta Force is a mission-based special forces game that tends towards realism and tactics and away from pure adrenaline action. Unlike Rainbow Six you only control one trooper, the other members of your team may provide backing fire and they often draw attention away from you, but they are not either directly or indirectly under your control. Also, unlike Rainbow Six, where you have to strategically plan your mission in advance and where all the missions take place inside or surrounding buildings, Delta Force gives you specific preset objectives to reach, most of which are in the big outdoors. You can also play Delta Force from a third-person view, like Special Ops, although checking yourself out in 3D here is rather like bringing a wardrobe door mirror to a battle. It's not only awkward, it's downright suicidal.

Your GPS screen shows waypoints, friendlies (blue) and enemies (red)

Another significant difference between Delta Force and the aforementioned is that it uses a Voxel-based graphics engine instead of polygons, a version of the one used in Novalogic's F-16/MiG-29/F22 flight sims. Objects look fairly convincing at short to medium range, but unfortunately very close up or very far away textures look like a cubist artist's worst nightmare.

Despite this the game is an absolute cracker. The odds are not in your favour and to achieve your objective you'll have to use stealth. One of the coolest enemy AI tricks in Delta Force follows the maxim 'fire and be found'. You might think it's prudent to open fire indiscriminately, but the noise and tracer lines will soon have enemy fire zeroed in on you. And – welcome to reality – there are no armour, health or extra life upgrades here. Cop lead in Delta Force and you'll be pushing up the daisies. Ammo is also limited, and can be wasted all too quickly.

To stay alive and under cover, your soldier can walk or run, kneel or crawl. Some combination of the above as well as ducking and weaving in open ground might just keep you watertight.

Mission objectives vary from search and destroy, to hostage rescue, object retrieval and air-strike target designation. To

Choose your weapon. This .50 calibre sniper gun is the Ferrari of firepower

That grenade did the business...

Chad, North Africa. A helicopter drops you and Alpha team off on a hostage rescue mission

achieve these objectives Military Intelligence will give you a set of waypoints to follow which seem to be the points of most resistance. After playing a scenario once or twice and getting killed you quickly learn to skirt around your waypoints and take enemy concentrations by surprise. However these waypoints also act as a trigger for your support units, and unfortunately by avoiding them you may end up having to go it alone.

Enemy AI is a mixed bag: as mentioned above, if you make yourself known you'll invariably have a swarm of drug gunmen or terrorists after you like bees swarming a jam sandwich. Yet, if you take long-distance pot shots at a stationary enemy soldier he sometimes seems to stand there scratching his head, trying to figure out just what those little pixelated dust puffs are. There are three enemy AI settings, Easy, Medium and Hard. These roughly translate into Blithering Idiot, Badly Trained Amateur, and Shoot Anything You See Or Hear. As campaigns progress, troop concentrations get bigger and individuals get smarter, regardless of which difficulty setting you first use.

Your fellow Delta Force troops are not the brightest coins in the fountain and seem to suffer mood swings that range between fits of suicidal bravado and bouts of cowardice. Along the way they sometimes get in your line of fire, while at other times they are nowhere to be seen in an emergency. But every now and then they pull off something spectacular and make your job easier.

Sound is uncomplicated and excellent. Your first indication of incoming fire is usually an ominous ricochet sound which is your cue to hit the dirt and crawl for cover. It can be hard to tell where fire is coming from, but earphones help. Radio announcements point out the status of remaining objectives and the fate of your colleagues.

Delta Force may not require 3D hardware acceleration, but it does demand something substantially more powerful than the quoted minimum P166 if you want a sense of realism – and lowering screen resolution is a necessary evil when 800x600 becomes too slow. Given a fast enough PC the graphics do work well enough, and although you'll never quite reconcile yourself to picking out tiny moving pixels purporting to be the enemy, you'll soon get caught up in the impressive atmosphere and forget about it.

With five campaigns comprising over 40 missions, and a nifty 16-man multiplayer game, Delta Force has plenty on offer for a tactically oriented action games player who has an interest in special forces and a bit of patience. Quake addicts will most likely find it a bit boring, and the Voxel graphics engine has almost taken on more than it can handle, but Delta Force is nevertheless an outstanding, atmospheric and addictive game in a still-sparse, new and exciting sub-genre.

Alan Dykes

A shortened, lightened M60 MG is aptly called a SAW

Your night vision scope picks up an enemy guard tower

PROS: As close as you can get to being a Green Beret without having it, and your head, blown off for real

CONS: Listen up NovaLogic: Voxel technology has its limitations! Probably too tactically oriented for the average first-person shooter fan

RELEASE DATE: 9 February

★ ★ ★ ★

Natural Fawn Killers

Who killed Bambi?

Rex loved it when the young master fed him pineapple chunks

Apparently, a shotgun makes a real mess of a rabbit at close range. But that's nothing to what a grenade launcher will do to the little beggar…

Natural Fawn Killers is a spoof of all those £20 US hunting games. Four pick-up weapons – rifle, chaingun, grenade launcher and homing missiles – are available to commit mayhem on Bambi and co. By the end of a level, the neighbourhood looks like the Somme in a fur coat.

It's simple to pick up, doesn't look too shabby in 3D accelerated mode and will have anyone whose sense of humour veers to the dark side in stitches the first time they nail Fluffybunnikins to a tree.

For a brief moment, I thought I'd found my dream game. Unfortunately, with only four types of critter to waste: rabbit, deer, bear and a T-Rex (as the end of game monster), it took less than two hours to finish all 11 levels.

In essence the gameplay consists of running around shooting more of the same. Occasionally you get to run backwards – shooting – if the bears get the hump. But that's all you get.

As throwaway, black-humoured, silly games go, this one has so much potential. I just wish the developers had made a better stab of it – say by adding a half-dozen more critters, some more comedy death animations and daft missions.

As it stands though, Natural Fawn Killers is just a grossly over-priced five-minute giggle.

Elvis Bacon

ESSENTIALS:
One Stop, 0181 939 8000, £29.99, 1 player, Keyboard, mouse Age Rating: ELSPA 15+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 Minimum PC: P166, 16Mb RAM, Dual-speed CD, SVGA, DirectX-compatible soundcard Advanced Graphics Support: D3D

DIFFICULTY: Easy

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★

Thunder Brigade

A battle for independence in hovering tanks

Thunder Brigade puts you in command of a United Systems rebel Grav-Tank, an interesting bit of machinery that allows you to skim with ease across a variety of landscapes in your mission-based quest to rid the Halon and Kildae star systems of the Halon Empire. It's a tall order for one guy in a tank, but more people join the rebellion by the day, so you ought to be in with a fighting chance.

Halon tanks take a lot of killing, but perseverance always pays off

You view the battle from the cockpit of your tank, which steers like a hovercraft and carries a neat array of weaponry. The scenery is generated using voxel technology, which produces lovely landscapes without the aid of a 3D-accelerator card, but appears blocky close up. Looking Glass Technology's Terranova used a similar engine three years ago, only it was less blocky and the fogging was realistic.

The mission structure is linear, but logical and well planned, and the game is fun to play. Thunder Brigade, however, pales into insignificance compared with games like Battlezone. A few years ago it may have been raved about, but now, unless you have an old machine that won't run anything written in the past few years, I'd give it a miss.

Mat Peck

ESSENTIALS:
Interactive Magic, 01344 409399, £29.99, 1-16 players (2-4 via Internet, 2-16 via LAN), Joystick, mouse, keyboard Age Rating: ELSPA 11+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 Minimum PC: P100, 32Mb RAM, Quad-speed CD, 2Mb SVGA card, Windows-compatible soundcard Advanced Graphics Support: None

DIFFICULTY: Easy

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★

Asghan The Dragon Slayer

Nearly as cute as Buffy The Vampire Slayer

LABEL: Grolier Interactive
TELEPHONE: 01865 264800
WEB: www.grolier.co.uk
DEVELOPER: Silmarils
PRICE: £34.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1
DIFFICULTY: Intermediate
AGE RATING: ELSPA 11+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P120 **Minimum RAM** 16Mb **CD** Quad-speed **Graphics** 1Mb SVGA DirectX-compatible **Sound** Soundblaster compatible **Control** Keyboard, mouse **Advanced Graphics Support** MMX, D3D, 3Dfx (Glide)

Asghan discovers that dragons really do fly south for the winter

If Asghan The Dragon Slayer were a Hollywood movie, it would be termed an all-action fantasy romp. There are dragons, witches, fairies, orcs, an enchanted island and a muscular, chiselled hero with a big sword.

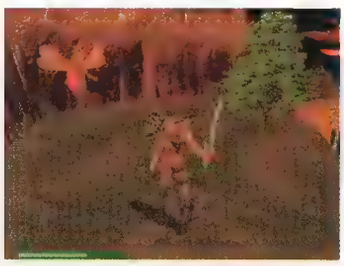
Unfortunately, therein lies its flaw. The story is so full of clichés it makes you cringe. You play Asghan the warrior prince, ousted from power by his evil uncle Morghan the Magician (who has teamed up with a bunch of dragons and plans to destroy your Kingdom). You have been told by Fiona the Fairy (no, really, her name is Fiona) to stop him before everything gets out of hand. Fiona offers help from time to time by singing at you. Unfortunately, when this happens, you have no control over Asghan and no way of making her stop. Why am I bullying the plot so? Simply because there is nothing else wrong with the game, and just a little more effort in this direction would have made it a classic.

Asghan is a third-person 3D action/adventure set on an island populated by the major denizens of fantasy literature. The action can be viewed from any position relative to the main character by simply moving the mouse and there is no mindless zipping around like the camera in Deathtrap Dungeon. Asghan swims, climbs and jumps with all the agility of Lara Croft, but unlike the 90s heroine, he does not aim at enemies for you and simply gun them down – it's up to you to do the fighting. Asghan has eight moves open to him, ranging from simple stabs to complex rolling manoeuvres. To dispatch enemies from afar you can switch to crossbow mode.

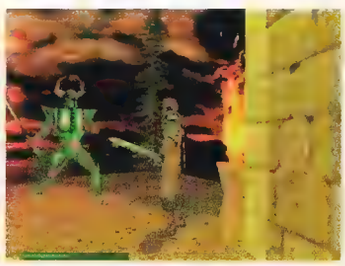
The enemy AI is poor at a distance, but gets painfully tough when in close combat, so you tend not to notice. Couple all this with the ability to mix and cast spells and throw in a huge variety of bad guys, and combat becomes exponentially more fun than Tomb Raider and considerably more satisfying than the mindless hacking of Die By The Sword.

The polygon-based 3D graphics engine sports fabulously detailed textures and few clipping problems. The island is huge and spiced with complex puzzles that aren't of the simple 'pull a lever to open a door' variety, and despite its corniness the story is is still engaging. Asghan The Dragon Slayer is a great game and throws down a heavy, studded gauntlet to Prince Of Persia 3D, set to arrive later this year.

Mat Peck



Put your sword away lad, there's ladies present!



I knew I shouldn't have knocked his pint over!

Asghan performs a scene from his favourite movie, Cliffhanger

PROS: All the things that Die By The Sword, Deathtrap Dungeon and Tomb Raider III should have been

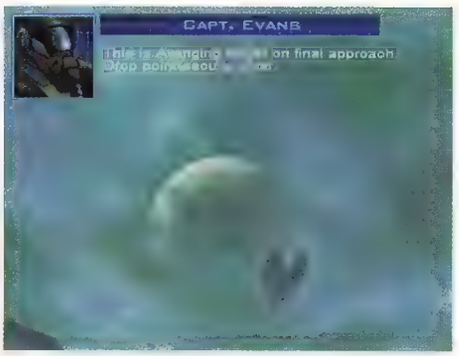
CONS: Wholly unoriginal story line

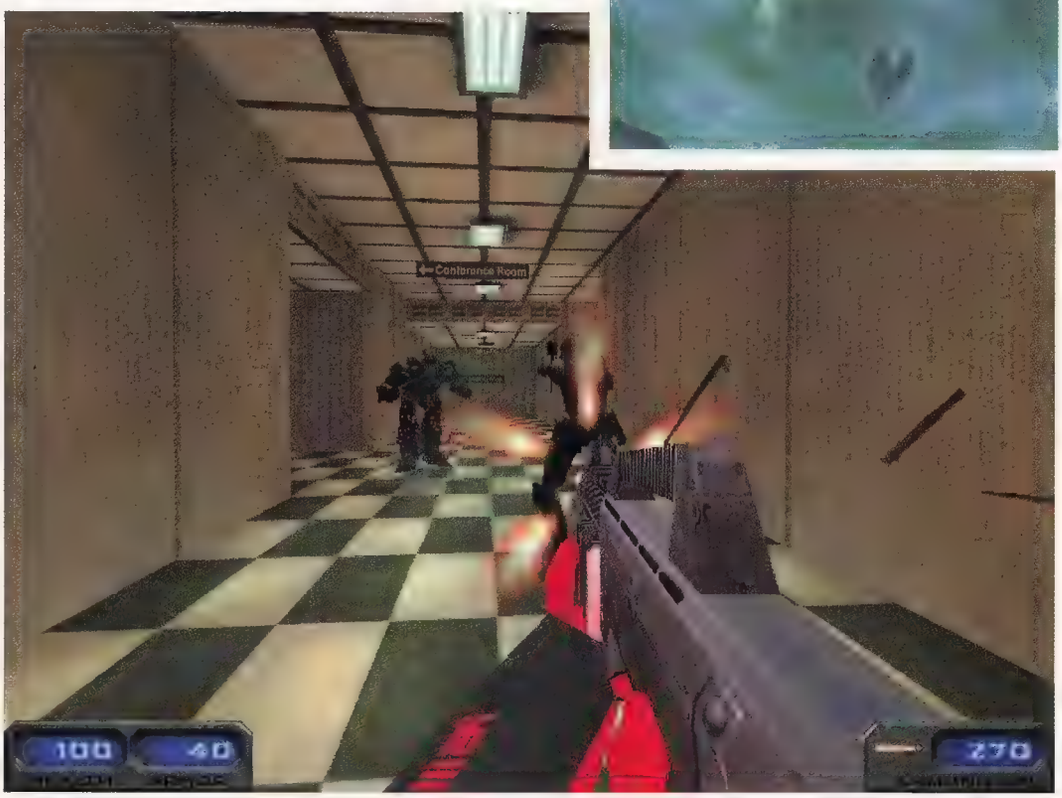
RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★ ★

Shogo: Mobile Armor Division

Bot stuff!





Don't just stand there, do something! Inset: What were the skies like when you were young?

LABEL: Microids

TELEPHONE: 0033 01460 15401

WEB: www.shogo-mad.com

DEVELOPER: Monolith Productions

PRICE: £29.99

NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-32 (2-32 via internet or LAN)

DIFFICULTY: Easy

AGE RATING: None

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum** PC P166 **Minimum RAM** 32Mb **CD** Quad speed **Graphics** DirectX 6 **Sound** DirectSound compatible **Control** Keyboard, mouse, joystick or gamepad **Advanced Graphics Support** D3D

Shogo is a first-person shooter that charts very much its own path, separate from SiN and Half-Life and the rest of the crowd thanks to its Japan-influenced animé visuals.

The special effects are gloriously over the top, with the screen frequently vanishing in a haze of smoke, explosions and bullets. The plot, which is told by in-game cut-scenes, is immersive and full of bizarre twists, and there are actually two endings – the final levels you play are decided by a choice you have to make earlier.

Another improvisation is the 'Critical Hit' system. Score a good hit on an enemy and you gain health! Which is handy, as the supply of health packs is fairly scarce and there are always hordes of enemies wherever you go. It also encourages you to make every shot count.

But what really sets Shogo apart is that in about half of the levels you get to jump into a 60-foot tall 'mecha' (the mobile 'armor' of the title), taking on infantry, tanks and other mechas in pyrotechnic battles among mountains and skyscrapers.

The controls behave just the same as they do when you're on foot, though – this is no MechWarrior. Action is fast and fluid in both modes, with a full range of weapons for each.

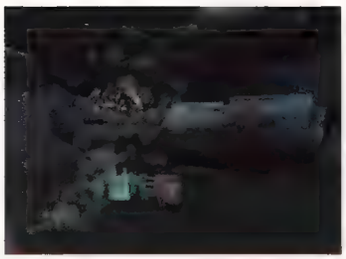
Unfortunately it's not all good news… Shogo was released before its time – Monolith admitted before the game even hit the shelves that it was riddled with bugs. Most of the problems were with multiplayer, but the AI had a serious flaw that could cause enemies to ignore you completely in some circumstances.

Even after installing the 7Mb patch (on this month's CD) the AI is still of the 'I'll just stand here while you shoot me, then' variety – enemies prefer to stay at their guard posts rather than chase you or run to help their buddies. And when they do move, some models' animation and walk speeds don't sync properly – their feet slide on the floor as they move. The effect is to make them look like Michael Jackson moonwalking…

The biggest complaint I have is that it took me less than 12 hours to complete the game, and only another hour or so to play through the alternate ending. I want more! However, at least I can keep myself busy with the multiplayer – it's a riot now it's been fixed.

Even so, Shogo is fun. There's none of that 'realistic physics' and 'revolutionary AI' stuff you see in other games, just solid gameplay, a great plot, plenty of big explosions and a refreshing excess of blood everywhere.

John Bye



Now THAT is what I call a gun...

And your in-game movie is...

PROS: Fun plot, over-the-top weaponry, animé styling (if you like animé)

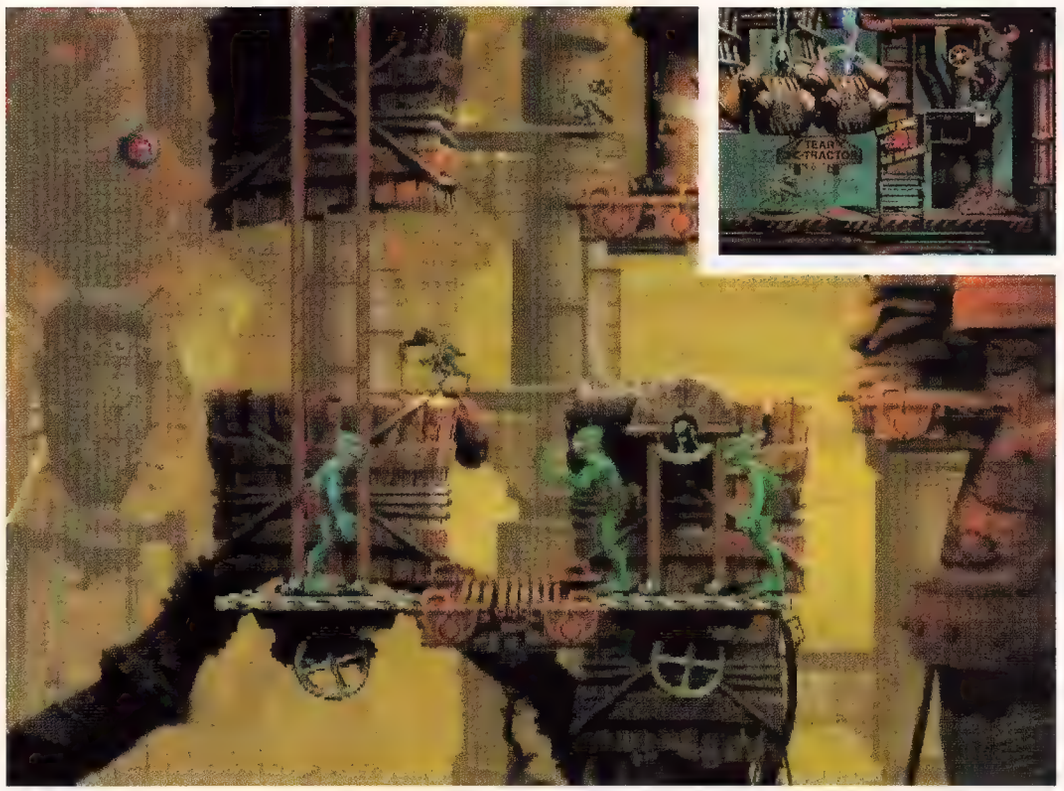
CONS: Poor animation and AI, single-player game too short, animé styling (if you don't like animé)

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★

Abe's Exoddus

Gone with the wind



Abe summons up the force... everyone stand well back! Inset: Crying tonight

LABEL: GT Interactive
TELEPHONE: 0171 723 0064
WEB: www.gtgames.com
DEVELOPER: Oddworld Inhabitants
PRICE: £34.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1
DIFFICULTY: Intermediate
AGE RATING: ELSPA 11+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P166 **Minimum RAM** 16Mb **CD** Quad-speed **Graphics** 16-bit SVGA **Sound** Windows-compatible **Control** Mouse, keyboard, gamepad **Advanced Graphics Support** None

Parp! You're in control of Abe again, on a quest to free Mudokons from slavery. This time, however, you have been asked to help by the spirits of the dead, whose bones are being mined to create SoulStorm Brew. Parp!

Abe's Exoddus is simultaneously a thinking-person's platformer and utterly daft at the same time. The flick-screen gameplay follows the classic tradition of giving you problems to solve to get through each level. The catch is that you will probably have a bunch of giggling, squabbling, drunken Muds in tow: not only will you have to keep them alive, you'll also have to marshal them into helping you open portals, remove barriers, disable Slig guards and so on. Sort of The Lost Vikings meets Aliens on a pub crawl. With wind.

Like most platform games you can run, jump, climb and interact with the environment – pulling levers, hopping into transport tubes and so forth. Unlike most platform games, however, you can also talk to your fellow Mudokons to get them to follow you from screen to screen, use items and so on.

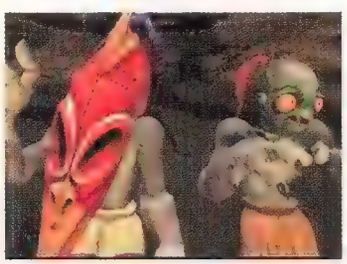
Nor is the gameplay limited to the foreground plane. Sometimes it is necessary to possess a creature in the background and get it to perform some action before you can progress further. Sometimes creatures in the background have been placed there so that you can learn new skills, and at other times you will find yourself moving through the background.

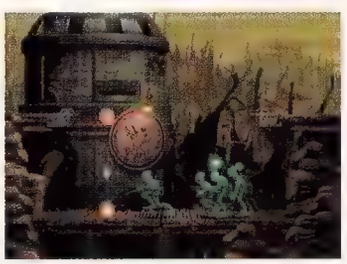
Possession is one of the abilities that comes into play later on, allowing you to take control of other characters (Sligs, Glukkons, Scrabs...) On a number of occasions, it is the only way to progress. Believe it or not, you can actually possess (and hence control) your farts, moving them around and exploding them. Remote-controlled floating air biscuits. There's a thought.

Abe's Exoddus is quality from start to finish. The game world is enormous, the screens 'flick' smoothly, and the way the FMV scenes are seamlessly integrated into level transitions is quite remarkable. Each puzzle suits its environment and there is more to them than simply 'hit the switch to open the door'. Some require contemplation of the order of things, some hang on a scripted event and some require quick reflexes. The balance between challenge and frustration is spot on, and the game is superbly paced in the way that it helps you to absorb new skills or information.

As a fan of platform games I find Abe's Exoddus almost impossible to fault. To be niggardly I might point out that the 640x480 graphics are pitched at a PlayStation level rather than the PC's, but since the game looks great anyway, who cares? Abe's Exoddus has character, challenge, and bags of humour. De-Parp!-lightful.

Elvis Bacon





With nostrils that large you're not gonna cope when the wind gets up

PROS: Humour, intelligent game design and the continuation of a genuinely original take on platform gaming. Quality stuff. Parp!

CONS: Graphics pitched at a PlayStation level rather than using the full potential of the PC. They still look good though

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

S.C.A.R.S

Battles against animal-shaped cars. Hmm...

Apparently, in 3000AD, the world is no longer controlled by people, but by super-computers who choose to entertain themselves by building cars in the shape of animals and then racing them. You have to wonder: do these stories come out of Christmas crackers or is someone really paid to think them up?

If you can get past the storyline, the game is not all bad. Best described as a PC version of Mario-Karts on steroids, S.C.A.R.S (Super Computer Animal Racing System) is a 3D-accelerated beast of a racing game. You select an animal-inspired car (the Rhino Roadster, for example) to race either against the clock, against a friend with split-screen racing, or against five computer-controlled motors. The circuits are pleasantly attractive and highly detailed, and spiced with an array of weapons for your collection and subsequent use in nuking opponents. Grand Prix mode offers four progressively more difficult cups to race for, and Challenge mode allows you to extend your choice of vehicle to include more powerful machines by simply beating them in a race.

I'll challenge your Rhino with my Meercat for the Grand Prix cup

The challenge, however, is short-lived. S.C.A.R.S is very much a case of 'what you see is what you get'. As a mindless racer, this game is about as good as it gets, but you'll find yourself craving something more after a disappointingly short period of time.

Mat Peck

ESSENTIALS:
Ubi Soft, 0181 944 9000, £29.99, 1-2 players (2 via same machine), Gamepad, joystick, mouse or keyboard, Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98, Minimum PC P166, 16Mb RAM, 3D accelerator required with SVGA graphics card, Quad-speed CD, Windows Native Soundcard, Advanced Graphics Support: MMX, D3D, 3Dfx, ATi Rage Pro, nVidia RIVA 128, Matrox G200

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★

Barbie Riding Club

For an action-adventure game aimed at five-year-olds and up, Barbie Riding Club is a dream. Not only do you get to ride a horse along a series of picturesque trails in Secret Valley, but there are also missions, races and sub-games along the way.

The mouse controls for controlling your horse – when riding in first-person mane-and-ears mode – were well within the grasp of Gemma, my five-year-old daughter. She even managed to complete one mission on her own – locating the mysterious wild horse of Secret Valley.

Barbie looks convincingly... well, Barbie-like, as do her racing chums Teresa and Christie. Static scenes look the part, but when riding they become blocky – though this is less important when galloping at speed.

While Barbie Riding Club is far from educational, it's great fun for horse-mad Barbie fans. Cheaper than riding lessons, too.

Ian Marsh

Whoah! Sassy – slow down

ESSENTIALS:
Mattel Media, 0171 519 5049, £24.99, 1 player, Mouse, keyboard Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98, Minimum PC P90, 16Mb RAM, Quad-speed CD, SVGA, SoundBlaster-compatibles, Advanced Graphics Support: None

DIFFICULTY: Easy

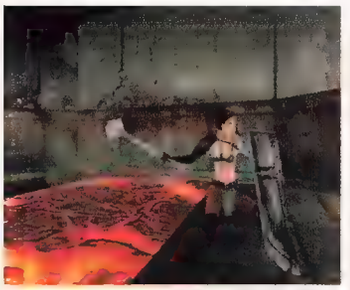
RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★ ★

Limb From Limb

Interplay's Tomb-Raider-with-swords game, Die By The Sword, gets the expansion pack treatment. If you weren't put off the first time round by the ludicrously difficult combat system and the uninspired level design, then Limb From Limb gives you more of the same – with knobs on. However, instead of offering – as you might expect – a completely new set of levels, you get a 'mini quest' (involving Maya, the damsel you rescued in the previous episode) and the chance to replay the original game as one of four new characters. Wow! There are some new weapons, new monsters, new multiplayer arenas and even a new 'Ogre hockey' multi-player game. It all adds up to, well, not much unless you really liked the original. Which, let's face it, is unlikely.

Pat Fox



Haven't we met before?

ESSENTIALS:
Interplay 01628 423723, £29.99, 1-4 players (2 via modem or serial cable, 2-4 via LAN) keyboard, mouse, joypad, joystick, Age Rating: ELSPA 15+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98, requires copy of Die By The Sword, Minimum PC P100, 16Mb RAM, Quad-speed CD, DirectX-compatible graphics and sound cards, Advanced Graphics Support: 3Dfx, Rendition

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★

Moto Racer 2

Not so super bikes

Good but eventually samey selection of driving surfaces including rolling French countryside

LABEL: Electronic Arts
TELEPHONE: 01753 549 442
WEB: www.ea.com
DEVELOPER: Delphine
PRICE: £39.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-8 (2-8 via null modem, modem or IPX LAN)
DIFFICULTY: Intermediate
AGE RATING: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P133 **Minimum RAM** 16Mb **CD** Quad-speed **Graphics** SVGA **Sound** SoundBlaster and compatibles **Control** Keyboard, joystick, gamepad **Advanced Graphics Support** D3D, 3Dfx

The motorbike genre's resurgence continues with this sequel to the best bike game of '97. Two years of development, 40 tracks, 3D-hardware-enhanced graphics, a nifty track editor and Yamaha sponsorship should add up to something pretty impressive – but sadly it's not all good news.

Like the original it features both dirt bike and Superbike racing, but unlike its arcade-only predecessor Moto Racer 2 features a simulation mode too – being somewhat less forgiving of mistakes and wild behaviour. Even the arcade mode has become more serious though – and while some would say this is good I'm not so sure. To my mind it has lost some of its simple fun edge without gaining genuine simulation reality.

Road bike racing lacks the sense of speed of Motocross levels

However, winning races and progressing is easier than it used to be, with slightly easier-going AI riders and less demanding time challenges. Moto Racer's frustratingly high difficulty level was an original downside. Anyone who uses analogue controllers that allow progressive braking and acceleration is definitely at an advantage here with a far smoother ride than you'll get when using the keyboard or a gamepad where hard braking can make your tyres screech more like a three-tonne Cadillac than a 500lb bike.

The sim emphasis is mainly noticeable riding Superbikes – surprisingly it seems to go in the opposite direction for Motocross. All of the Motocross levels are much bumpier than before, making you feel as though you're in control of a motorised Space Hopper.

You'll certainly spend copious quantities of time in the air, where you have more momentum than Evel Knievel riding a cruise missile… you rarely have to take your finger off the accelerator button. Just don't try to cut corners in the air though, you'll hit a 'glass wall' and get knocked back. On the ground, making contact with the side of a road on either a Superbike or a Motocross mount drastically slows you down.

Moto Racer 2 strives for a more realistic look than the slightly cartoonish arcade graphics of Moto Racer and although it looks very good in screenshots it falls down somewhat in motion. Some tracks are more convincing than others and are beautiful to behold, but all are let down sooner or later by pixelisation and motion/perspective problems, especially in 640x480 resolution. Things get better in 800x600 or higher mode with 3D hardware support but it's never completely smooth.

It's a pity, but Moto Racer 2 is a below average sequel. There's no doubt that it's bigger, more accessible, and superficially more attractive, but Moto Racer was a much more ground-breaking title for its time and this isn't. For my money UbiSoft's Redline Racer handles road-going superbikes with far more compulsiveness and arcade drama, while Microsoft's Motocross Madness has a firmer grip on the dirt bike scene.

Alan Dykes

PROS: Superbikes and Motocross all in one game, easy-to-use track editor

CONS: Ugly graphics in places. Jack of all trades, master of none

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★

Test Drive 4x4

Four-wheeled judder

LABEL: Accolade
TELEPHONE: 01752 549442
WEB: www.accolade.com
DEVELOPER: Accolade
PRICE: £34.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-2
DIFFICULTY: Easy
RATING: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P133 **Minimum RAM** 16Mb **CD** Dual-speed **Graphics** DirectX 6-compatible **Sound** Windows-compatible soundcard **Control** Keyboard, gamepad, joystick **Advanced Graphics Support** 3Dfx

Watch out for the mud and rock traps to slow you down

Hey, shark! Shark! Sorry folks, I'm in a hurry

Here frustrated farmers, soldiers and National Trust wardens can jolt and jar their way at top speed down a muddy Welsh track in a Land Rover Defender V90, one of 12 vaguely realistic 4x4's including a Range Rover, Jeep Wrangler and the US Military Hummer. And more specialised versions of these off-road powerhouses become available to you as the game, and your race earnings, progress.

All vehicles are available with either manual or automatic transmission, and the steering is slow to respond meaning it's difficult to lose total control of the vehicle and spin off the track. That said, there are many obstacles in your path and although the majority of trees can be driven through without the slightest hiccup, others are cunningly placed to halt your progress with a shattering thump.

The sluggish driving model makes it hard to force your competitors off the track completely, but good throttle control and the right moment can land them in the soup big time.

Only six tracks are provided in total, and certain vehicle types and race locations are unavailable until you've qualified for the World Tour's final stages. Sound effects are basic and the grunge score quickly starts to grate, but there are seven different camera views of your vehicle on offer.

Graphically, the game is a big improvement on predecessor Test Drive: Off-Road, and is on more of a par with Microsoft's Monster Truck Madness 2. It's still not technically spectacular and some of the trackside props are just comical, but the scenery is excellent.

Test Drive 4x4 is enjoyable and an interesting variant on the usual driving game genre.

Martin Courtney

PROS: Nice scenery, unusual vehicles and easy to play

CONS: Bumping around six different tracks at average speed can quickly pall

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★

Choose your moment carefully and force your competitors off the track

Fault Line for Quake II

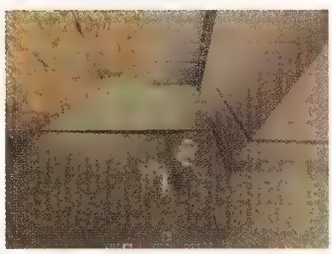
Quack add-ons

Fault Line For Quake II is a collection of freeware mods and maps collected from the Internet and packaged on to a single CD with a rudimentary front-end allowing you to browse the contents.

The maps are contained with a series of directories, listing each one by name. But there is no extra information regarding the maps, so it's pot-luck whether you install a single-player or a deathmatch map.

Information for each of the add-ons is limited to the included readmefile that comes with the mod. Also included are a number of front-ends for Quake II, making the process of running maps a little easier.

Tom Gordon



Pot-luck playing

ESSENTIALS:

East Valley Software, www.eastvalley.com, £14.99, 1-32 (2-32 via LAN or Internet), Keyboard, mouse, Age Rating: ELSPA 15+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

Installation: Win95/Win98, requires registered version of Quake II, Minimum PC P133, 16Mb RAM, Dual-speed CD, VGA, DirectX-compatible sound, Advanced Graphics Support: Open GL, 3Dfx, Power VR

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★

Viper Racing

Action racer from the Grand Prix Legends lot

LABEL: Sierra
TELEPHONE: 0118 920 9100
WEB: www.sierra-online.co.uk
DEVELOPER: Papyrus
PRICE: £39.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-4 (2 via modem or serial link, 2-4 via LAN)
DIFFICULTY: Intermediate
AGE RATING: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win 95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P133 **Minimum RAM** 32Mb **CD** Quad-speed **Graphics** SVGA **Sound** SoundBlaster and compatibles **Control** Keyboard, joystick, steering wheel **Advanced Graphics Support** D3D (DirectX 6)

This outlandish paintjob should attract some attention

You are going nowhere, my son

For the discriminating speed junkies we now present Viper Racing. Papyrus is the team behind Grand Prix Legends – here tweaking the balance away from hard-core sim, and a little more towards out-and-out arcade racer.

There is so much right with this game. Let's be superficial for a second – it looks great, one of the most persuasive arguments to buy a 3D card on four wheels. Running on a 350MHz Pentium II Voodoo 2 SLI machine it manages a healthy 40-plus frames per second at a resolution of 1024x768 with all the latest goodies hardware acceleration permits. Oh momma.

The game engine is superb. Even in arcade mode you require a certain degree of restraint lest you end up a smoking heap of scrap metal on the side of the track. It's inadvisable to try to play with the keys – they're just not responsive enough. A decent joystick or quality steering wheel is a must. Racing becomes a matter of strategy, depending on the skill of the opponents, who will quite happily ram you off the track if you get in their way. Knowing the tracks, where to floor it, where to apply the brakes, and where to pull out the rosary beads and start repenting, are all vital to success. The eight tracks, varying in difficulty, are well designed, feel absolutely spot on and if they get a little familiar, you can always reverse them to give them a fresh edge.

As expected, there is a garage where you can tinker with your baby. Drag factors, brake bias, aerodynamics, it's all here. Don't be put off though, it's all in plain English and if it isn't as obsessively detailed as some simulators, then it's all the better for it. After all, people who actually modify these cars have degrees in engineering for a reason.

In career mode you use prize money to upgrade from a mere car to a beast of a machine, all shiny pistons and spotless bodywork, there's even an easy to use paintshop for that gleaming custom paint job. It won't stay gleaming for long, mind you – damage is handled realistically and, for the Maureens among you, the sad sight of bare, grazed metal and hideously deformed chassis will be all too common.

Have you ever seen such a monumental lack of taste in one car?

Downers? Well, four-player multiplayer is a little limited. Also, you will only be driving the one car, regardless of model upgrades and there are only eight tracks. These points shave a star off the score. But the sheer class of what Papyrus has achieved – an accessible, fast and phenomenally good looking blast of a game – means a well deserved hearty recommendation from us.

Paul Ditta

For those with the hardware to cope, feast your eyes

In-car views are nice but on the whole rather useless

PROS: Luscious graphics, bang on driving model, lots of options, some nice silly touches

CONS: Limited to four players and one car... that's it really

RELEASE DATE: February

★ ★ ★ ★

It takes more to make a classic game than a classic board game

A great board game often does not a great PC game make. Hasbro has been exceptionally busy lately, launching a fleet of its board game babies into cyberspace – but it's been a hit-and-miss affair. More misses than hits – as we saw last month with Cluedo II and the kids' classic Operation, neither of which exactly clambered into the *PC Gaming World* roll of honour. Stratego finds a better fate. If you're new to the strategy world, give this one a whirl for a good introduction to the genre. Game Of Life doesn't get such a glowing recommendation. The original board game was never the most thrilling way of passing the time, and its outing onto the PC has done it few favours.

The pub quiz hasn't always fared too well either when it has left the cosy confines of the bar and found its way into the cybercafe. Text parsing problems have always been at the heart of the disappointment in CD quizzes. But I've finally found one that passes muster – Carling's Quiz Master has a clever 'close enough' option that recognises if your answer resembles its own answer and asks you, the player, if you were close enough to score a point – hoorah for that.

Meanwhile, if you're after a bit of nostalgia – and this is the classics section after all – take a trip back in time to 1979. You're in the chip shop and you're shooting at great big lumps of space rock – yep Asteroids, is back, riding in on a wave of late 70s and early 80s nostalgia, closely followed by Culture Club and the Human League. But don't get too excited – you know how they say, if it ain't broke, don't fix it... oops! Somebody just broke it by trying to dress it up in new clothes for the new millennium. Cool Britannia devotees take note.

Naomi MacKay

Comments or questions on classics and puzzles? Write to Naomi MacKay or email her on pcgw_mail@zd.com

Stratego

One for the ploys

Classic board games that make you think and work well on a computer are rare. Stratego is one of them – an elegant game that requires tactics, intelligent guesswork and bluff to win.

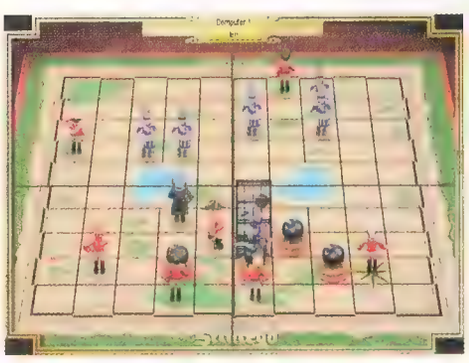
It may look like a Battle Chess variant, but that's just because of the detailed, animated playing pieces that fidget, cough and sneeze while waiting for you to make a move. Stratego is all about capturing the enemy's flag. To do this you have pieces that have army ranks, ranging in strength from Scout (the weakest) to the Marshal. When two pieces meet on the board, they fight with the highest ranking piece winning – ties send both pieces to the graveyard. In addition there are Bombs, stationary pieces that destroy any piece that attacks them apart from a Miner, who disarms them, and Spies, which lose to any unit on the board except the Marshal, who they can assassinate provided they strike first.

The knack lies in probing an enemy's army and deducing where he has hidden his Flag Boy, which units are Bombs, and where the high-ranking pieces are. Play too rashly and you can quickly lose your best pieces – far better to lose a few Scouts to identify pieces. And this is where having a good memory is handy – once a piece is identified through combat, you need to keep track of it to bring up a piece that will beat it.

Defensive, normal and aggressive modes tailor the style of your computer opponent, which will play a satisfactory game. The AI seems to cope with the concept of bluff, retiring and advancing pieces that are threatened by pieces whose identity is known, although has a regrettable tendency to forget the location of Bombs.

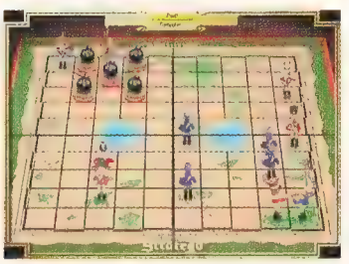
Some considerable time ago, the very similar Tri-Tactics and Dover Patrol board games fired my interest in strategy games. As an introduction to simple strategy games, the computerised Stratego is not only hard to beat but it's also a faithful, involving conversion of a classic.

Ian Marsh



Animations vary depending on the captor

Bombs away: Only Miners can defuse these defensive pieces



ESSENTIALS:
Hasbro Interactive, 01429 855038,£29.99, 1-6 players (2-3 via same PC, 2 via modem, 2-4 via LAN, Internet), Keyboard, mouse, Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98, Minimum PC: P100, 16Mb RAM, Quad-speed CD, 2Mb SVGA, SoundBlaster compatibles Advanced Graphics Support: None

DIFFICULTY: Easy

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★ ★

Scotland Yard

A case of PC plod...

Ravensburger's Scotland Yard is a classic board game of criminal hare and detective hounds. The villainous Mr X is loose on the streets of central London, and a posse of up to five of Scotland Yard's agents have to track him down and put him away. Mr X obligingly shows his head every three to five turns, providing a clue about how to intercept him.

Movement between locations requires taxi, bus and underground tickets along the corresponding yellow, green and red routes. The type of Mr X's used ticket is known to the agents, helping them to deduce his route. But agents have a limited number of tickets and must nab the villain before they run out.

The basic version of the game is challenging and well implemented if a trifle short. Where Scotland Yard falls apart is in the advanced game – a detective adventure that runs slower than the brain of Inspector Lestrade. In the advanced game, the powers of Mr X – who can be one of eight characters, from a cat burglar through to a supernatural creature such as Dracula – come into play as he tries to enact a nefarious scheme. Each of the 11 agents also has special powers. It is no longer enough, however, for agents to find Mr X – they must also correctly identify him to effect his capture.

Crime bosses lurk in the darndest locations – hope Her Majesty knows!

Zooming in on a location provides a detailed, atmospheric scene with people to question or properties to plunder. But moving across these scenes is painfully slow, and the pathing is so poor that characters must be guided around every obstruction. This procedure is vital if you are to progress, so the result is to drag out a game of involving detective work beyond the level of mortal endurance.

Ian Marsh

ESSENTIALS:
Cryo, 01926 315552, £29.99, 1-6 players (2-6 via Internet), Keyboard, mouse Age Rating: ELSPA 11+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 Minimum PC: P166, 16Mb RAM, Eight-speed CD, 2MB SVGA card, DirectX-compatible sound Advanced Graphics Support: None

DIFFICULTY: Easy

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

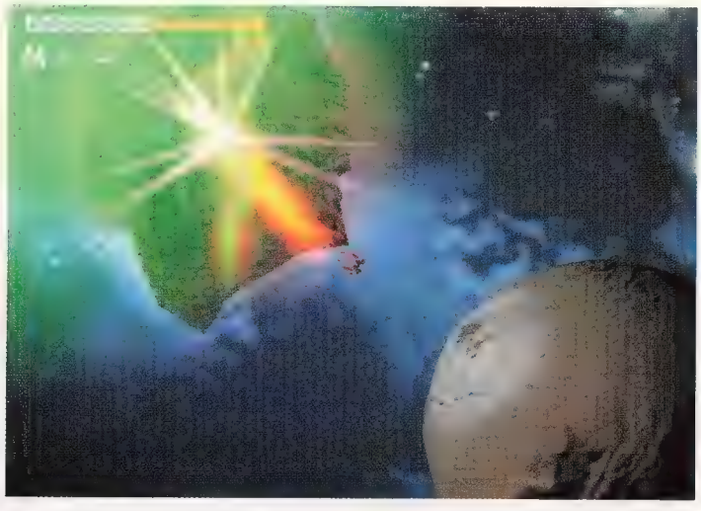
★ ★

Asteroids

Asteroids? Haemorrhoids more like

Let me ask you to use your imagination for a moment. Suppose you take a Fiat Strada, remove the shell and somehow manage to weld into place the body of a TVR Chimera. To make your creation a little different, you install the latest washing machine and combined clock radio/toilet-roll dispenser. What are you left with? Is it a really amazing car with unique features, or is it a fundamentally crap motor dressed up to look like something it isn't, with a couple of new gadgets that are utterly pointless?

Asteroids is the modified Fiat Strada of the gaming world. It is a remake of the 1979 arcade classic with flashy graphics, an awful, half-hearted attempt at a story line and a bunch of power-up weapons that add absolutely nothing to the game play. Today's players expect more than single-screen rock-blasting tedium, even if they do now need a 3D-accelerator card to see most of the effects. Asteroids clones are available free on the Internet, and are fundamentally exactly the same game. This baby retails at £24.99! The only remotely interesting part of this game is the 1979 version with all the original sound effects, hidden under a green rock. If you want to see a proper remake of a classic game, take a look at Battlezone. Asteroids, for anyone but the tragically addicted, is a complete waste of money.



'Shoot the big rock... shoot it... quick'

Mat Peck

ESSENTIALS:
Activision, 01895 456700,£24.99, 1 player, Keyboard, joystick, gamepad Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 Minimum PC: P90, 16Mb RAM, Quad-speed CD, 2Mb PCI or AGP DirectX compatible graphics card, Windows-compatible soundcard, Advanced Graphics Support: D3D, 3Dfx,MMX, PowerVR, Intel i740, Matrox

DIFFICULTY: Easy

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★

All In One Carling Quiz Master

The parse and knows

I play pub quizzes. The fact that our team (which changes names frequently to avoid being identified) is better known for winning the beer raffle than the competition itself is something I probably should have kept to myself, rather than sharing it with all of you.

Be that as it may, I was not too keen to see another quiz game, because I've always been a bit disappointed with them. The questions are not usually the problem – it's the poor text parsing that is to blame for the frustrating time I've had with PC quizzes. But that's at an end, thanks to Carling Quiz Master. This is actually a set of two quizzes – the Ultimate Pub Quiz and the Ultimate Football Quiz, each with over 7,000 questions.

GSP has come up with an ingenious way around the annoying habit quiz games have had in the past – you know, it asks you who rules Great Britain, you say the Queen, it says wrong, the answer is Queen Elizabeth II, ruler of the British Empire, defender of the faith…

The 'close enough' option puts this quiz way ahead of the others

But hooray for GSP – now if it is a little unsure, it tells you the right answer and asks if your answer was close enough. Yes, some people will try to beat the computer by telling it they're right when they're wrong, but for most of us it's a good idea.

Options allow you to tailor the game to your players – if you've got a real Speedy Gonzalez who always buzzes in, even if they have no idea what the answer is, you can opt for the computer to ask you each a question in turn rather than playing a buzz-in game. There are 11 categories to choose from including pop music, entertainment, sport and words, as well as several general knowledge categories. The football quiz covers topics such as The Football league, FA Cup, commentators and British Managers (Home and Abroad) – enough to keep even the hardened fanatic on their toes.

And if you grow tired of playing on the screen, or are planning a quiz night for a club or pub you can print out your own quiz sheets offering questions from a variety of categories. As a bonus, you get a copy of the Ultimate Sports quiz too – how's that for a bargain?

Whether you just want to test yourself against the computer, or pit your wits against friends, the Carling Quiz Master will give you a good run for your money – though you won't have a chance of winning the jackpot at your local. But then nor will you have to endure the embarrassment of public defeat week after week, after week...

Naomi MacKay

ESSENTIALS:
GSP, 01480 496575, £19.95, 1-3 players (2-3 on same PC), Mouse, Age Rating: ELSPA 11+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 Minimum PC: P100, 8Mb RAM, Dual-speed CD, 256-colour graphics, 16-bit soundcard Advanced Graphics Support: None

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★ ★

The CD-Rom Game Of Life

Here's another one of those board games which should have been renamed bored games. I've played the board game version of Game of Life and it's hardly up there with the greats of family entertainment. So I wasn't too pleased to find that the PC version has little extra to offer. Basically, the idea is that whoever has the most money when everyone's retired is the winner – which is the only part of it which is in any way like real life.

At the start you get to choose your character and the colour of car you'd like to drive. Do you want to start university (which costs thousands but gives you more career options) or go straight into your career (no costs there, but less choice of jobs to choose from)? That's about it really. Spin the spinner, drive around the board in your car and take whatever life deals out to you. That was the classic board game. But, oh joy, there's an enhanced version too – but sadly this has no redeeming features. In the enhanced game, the only difference is that the life tiles, which can be exchanged for cash, are replaced by 'Life's Little Games' – games of chance that give you an opportunity to make more money.

There is an option for network play, and you can play with up to five other players on the same screen – but I wouldn't advise subjecting your friends to this – unless you're keen to get them out of your life. Opt for the computer characters instead.

If this is the game of life, give me the euthanasia option.

Naomi MacKay

Life: It's a belter. Not

ESSENTIALS:
Hasbro Interactive, 01429 855038, £24.99, 1-6 players (2-6 via same screen and Internet) Keyboard, mouse Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 Minimum PC: P90, 16Mb RAM, Quad-speed CD, SVGA, Windows soundcard Advanced Graphics Support: None

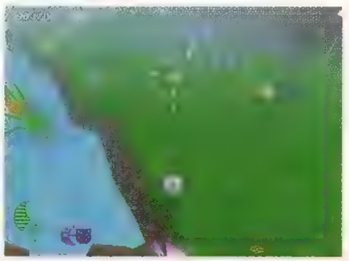
DIFFICULTY: Easy

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★

Centipede

Crawling into the 1990s



Preparing to defend a castle from the insect onslaught

The vogue for resurrecting classic arcade cabinets has been in full swing recently. With Battlezone and Asteroids both achieving a 3D rebirth, Hasbro has decided the time is right for Centipede, Atari's retro blaster, to receive a thoroughly modern makeover.

You'll certainly remember the original insectoid shoot 'em-up, which helped pass many an idle hour in the local arcades with its gleaming trackball and frenetic blasting action. And indeed, this version contains a full, faithfully recreated classic arcade Centipede game. Of more interest however, is the new 3D Adventure mode, which drags Atari's deadly wriggler, kicking and screaming into the 90s. Instead of static levels with ever increasing waves of enemies, the action now takes place across a pleasing series of 3D arenas, with different mini-missions and objectives to achieve. The same finger-on-the-trigger action is very much to the fore, but there is now full 360-degree movement, villagers to save, new and varied enemies to fight, some interesting power-ups and even a puzzle element to cope with.

Most importantly Centipede, the 90s version, is still tremendous fun to play and while it doesn't exactly push forward the boundaries of gaming, it's a good-looking blastathon, which retains many of the highly addictive qualities of its arcade predecessor.

If you're in the market for a colourful, involving, 3D blaster, then you could do a whole lot worse than giving this resurrected wriggler a try.

John Houlihan

ESSENTIALS:

Hasbro Interactive, 0181 569 1234, £34.99, 1-2 players (via same PC, LAN, modem and Internet), Keyboard, mouse, gamepad
Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

Installation: Win95/Win98 Minimum PC: P133, 16Mb RAM, Quad-speed CD, DirectX 5+ and compatibles, Advanced graphics support: 3Dfx

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★ ★

LOW PRICES • FAST DELIVERY • QUALITY SERVICE

TEL: 01342 836888

OR FAX ORDERS TO 01342 836883

Wolfcat

PC CD ROM GAMES

WE ALSO STOCK PLAYSTATION & N64

3D ULTRA PINBALL - TURBO RACING	12.99	HALF LIFE	29.99	RETURN TO KRONDOR	29.99
ACTUA SOCCER 3	25.99	HARDWAR	25.99	SETTLERS III	27.99
AGE OF EMPIRES	23.99	HEAVY GEAR 2	34.99	SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE	12.99
AGE OF EMPIRES: ROME DATA DISK	19.99	HERETIC 2	28.99	SIERRA SPORTS BASEBALL 99	17.99
APACHE HAVOC	34.99	HEXEN II	12.99	SIERRA SPORTS FOOTBALL 99	17.99
ASGHAN	29.99	HOYLE'S CLASSIC GAMES	17.99	SIM CITY 3000	29.99
ASTEROIDS	19.99	INCOMING	21.99	SIMPSONS: VIRTUAL SPRINGFIELD	19.99
BALDURS GATE	35.99	JEDI KNIGHT & MYSTERIES		SOUTH PARK	16.99
BIGGEST NAMES/ BEST GAMES	22.99	OF THE SITH	26.99	SPEED BUSTERS	27.99
CAESAR III	24.99	JIMMY WHITE'S SNOOKER 2	29.99	STAR TREK : KLINGON HONOR GUARD	29.99
CARMAGEDDON 2	28.99	KING'S QUEST MASK OF ETERNITY	29.99	STAR TREK: BIRTH OF THE FED	29.99
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3	24.99	LEGO CREATOR	26.99	STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON	27.99
CIVILISATION II: CALL TO POWER	34.99	LINKS LS 99	29.99	STARCRAFT: BATTLECHEST	29.99
CLUEDO 2	24.99	LUCASARTS: MONKEY ISLAND	24.99	STARCRAFT: BROOD WAR	17.99
COLIN McRAE RALLY	22.99	LUCASARTS: OUTLAWS	7.99	STARSIEGE	29.99
COMBAT FLIGHT SIMULATOR	32.99	MAGIC THE GATHERING LTD		TEAM APACHE	28.99
COMMAND & CONQ RED ALERT	19.99	EDITION PACK	27.99	TEST DRIVE 5	29.99
COMMAND & CONQ TIBERIAN SUN	32.99	MAY DAY FS '98	19.99	THIEF: DARK PROJECT	29.99
COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES	28.99	MICHAEL OWEN'S WL SOCCER	29.99	TIGER WOODS '99	29.99
DUNE 2000	29.99	MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIM	37.99	TITANIC: ADVENTURE OUT OF TIME	14.99
DUNGEON KEEPER GOLD	11.99	MONOPOLY STAR WARS	12.99	TOMB RAIDER	14.99
ESPN XGAMES PRO BOARDER	29.99	MYST	19.99	TOMB RAIDER 2	21.99
EXTREME G XG2	28.99	NBA LIVE 99	29.99	TOMB RAIDER 3	28.99
FA PREMIER LEAGUE MANAGER	29.99	NEED FOR SPEED 3 HOT PURSUIT	30.99	TOTAL AIR WAR	30.99
FALCON 4.0	28.99	NFL MADDEN '99	29.99	TUROK 2	28.99
FIFA 99	29.99	ODDWORLD: ABE'S EXODDUS	28.99	ULTIMA COLLECTION	21.99
FINAL FANTASY 7	28.99	POLICE QUEST SWAT 2	28.99	ULTIMATE SOCCER MANAGER	
FOOTBALL WORLD MANAGER	19.99	POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING	34.99	SEASON EDITION	29.99
GABRIEL KNIGHT ANTHOLOGY	12.99	POWERCHESS 2	24.99	VIPER RACING	29.99
GANGSTERS: ORGANISED CRIME	29.99	PREMIER MANAGER 98	15.99	WARGASM	29.99
GLOBAL DOMINATION	29.99	QUAKE II	26.99	WARHAMMER: CHAOS GATE	29.99
GRAND PRIX LEGENDS	28.99	QUAKE II: NET PACK 1	12.99	WORLD CUP 98	17.99
GRAND THEFT AUTO	16.99	QUEST FOR GLORY 5: DRAGON FIRE	27.99	WORMS ARMAGEDDON	27.99
GREAT BATTLES OF CAESAR	12.99	RAILROAD TYCOON 2	28.99	X WING ALLIANCE	33.99
GRIM FANDANGO	29.99	RAINBOW SIX	25.99	X-WING V TIE FIGHTER & EXPANSION	26.99

+ PLEASE CALL FOR UNLISTED TITLES +

ACCESSORIES

WE ALSO STOCK OTHER PERIPHERALS - PLEASE CALL

MS SIDEWINDER FORCE FEEDBACK WHEEL £129.99
Smooth steering action.
Effective force feedback.
Quick-release clamp.

SAITEK X36 COMBO £82.99
Fully programmable.
7 fire buttons inc. missile launcher.
4 hat switches. Throttle control.
Rudder control. 2 rotary controls.
4 LED displays.

GRAVIS XTERMINATOR £31.99
Proportional directional pad, proportional throttle, 6 programmable buttons, 8-way digital direct onal pad, 8-way point-of-view switch, 2 digital triggers, 2 player connector.

LOGIC 3 PHANTOM £23.99
Analogue joystick, 4 high speed microswitched fire buttons, dual speed auto fire, T-bar throttle control, 4/8 way view switch, X & Y trim controls.

MICROSOFT SIDEWINDER FREESTYLE PRO £44.99
Actual motion sensor
6 programmable buttons,
8-way D-pad, throttle, 2 triggers

SAITEK CYBORG 3D £34.99
Adjustable for right or left hand, precise 3D twist function 24 programmable actions.

LOGIC 3 TORNADO £9.99
Analogue joystick, auto fire, 2 fire buttons, X & Y trim controls

SAITEK CYBORG 3D PAD £29.99
Programmable 3D PC pad, analogue mini joystick, 3 programmed modes: Arcade, Fly and Drive, 4 triggers and 6 fire buttons

EXCHANGE POLICY: If you are unhappy with your purchase for any reason, simply return the goods in perfect condition within three days of receipt by recorded delivery and subject to a fee (10% or minimum of £4), we will swap it for another item. We reserve the right to refuse exchange if the item is not received back in perfect condition.

Cheques / Postal Orders should be made payable to: Wolfcat Limited, Haylands Cottage, Godstone Road, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6BT

Tel: 01342 836888 Fax: 01342 836883 email: sales@wolfcat.demon.co.uk

Some products listed may not yet be available and prices may change. Prices correct at time of going to press. E&OE.

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS TAKEN
0% SURCHARGE
Open 9am to 8pm Monday-Saturday
10am to 4pm Sunday

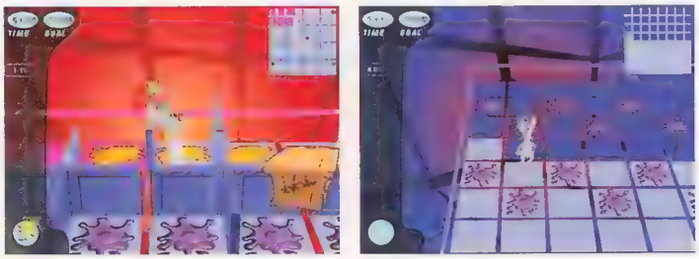
Pinky and The Brain World Conquest

Avoid the mouse trap

Back in the old days, maze games involved marbles or gyroscopes. Now, in this game for youngsters, the protagonists are the Warner Bros Animaniacs characters – a Machiavellian mouse with a genetically engineered intellect (The Brain), and his idiot sidekick (Pinky). The aim is world domination, the method is completing mazes in an allotted time. And these aren't ordinary mazes – you have wall-builders, teleportation, and a host of other gadgets and power-ups... everything that a modern mouse needs to conquer the world.

You can play as either Pinky or The Brain, negotiating ever more difficult mazes and facing PC-controlled opponents. Or take on networked players in multiplayer mode. As well as using power-ups and maze features to your advantage, there's a choice of three camera views and a radar map to help you plan your strategy.

Test your wits in dozens of labyrinths, ranging from quickies lasting 30 seconds to five-minute marathons. There are four varieties of maze. In timed versions you need to convert the most squares to your chosen colour before time runs out. Land mazes require you to be first to claim a given number of squares. And some levels are a combination. Tag challenges are probably best for multiplayer gaming, where keeping hold of the cheese for the longest period secures a victory. What self-respecting mouse could resist?



Test your wits and help The Brain and Pinky conquer the world

And if the supplied mazes make you feel like a hamster in a wheel, use the Maze Builder to create your own.

To be honest, though, cheesy is an apt description for Pinky And The Brain World Conquest. There's insufficient problem-solving content to make up for the stodgy and frustrating gameplay and simplistic design. When sound effects and video excerpts are a game's highlights, you know it's one to avoid.

Craig Paterson

ESSENTIALS:
Southpeak Interactive, 01895 456700, £19.99, 1-4 players (2-4 via LAN, Internet), Keyboard, mouse, gamepad, Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98, Minimum PC: P166, 32Mb RAM, Quad-speed CD, 2Mb SVGA, Windows compatible sound, Advanced Graphics Support: D3D, 3Dfx

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

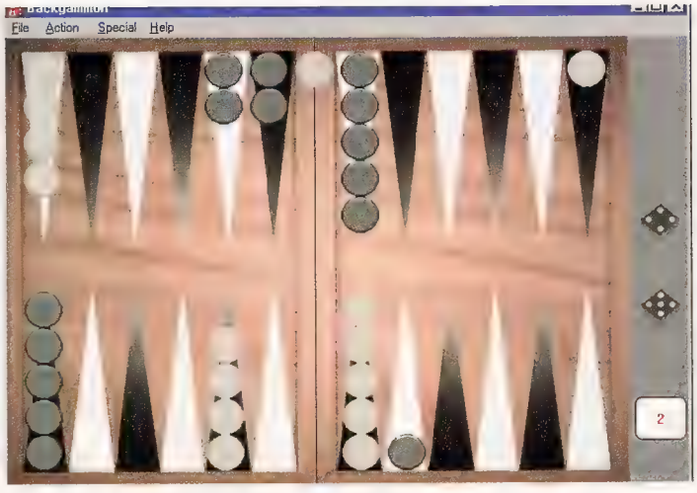
★ ★

Intelligent Strategy Games

Bridging the gap

The Intelligent Strategy Games compendium from GSP Software includes 10 classic strategy games in a single package. Included are 4-In-a-Line, Backgammon, Bridge, Checkers, Chess, Chinese Chess, Go, Gomuku, Renju and Reversi. The games are competently handled and offer a decent challenge, making this collection a worthwhile experience.

Each of the games has been created by Oxford Softworks, well known for its ability to create challenging strategy games, and last seen in these pages with Chess System TAL II. All the games provide almost unlimited amounts of gameplay as you work your way through the various skill settings.



Play to win: choose from 10 classic games to beat your neighbour

I was impressed to see a version of Go – it's rarely seen in strategy compilations. Classics such as 4-In-a-Line are familiar favourites, and Reversi (also know as Othello) is a welcome addition. Given the heritage of the creators of this software, each of the titles provides the full range of skill level, from novice through to expert.

The games are designed to be run in a window of their own, so it is possible to load up several games at once (if you're feeling like a masochist, that is!). The one drawback is that the games are very similar in look, and are fairly similar in the way they play.

But they are quite challenging, even on their easiest setting, forcing you to think about your next move – which can only be a good thing.

Tom Gordon

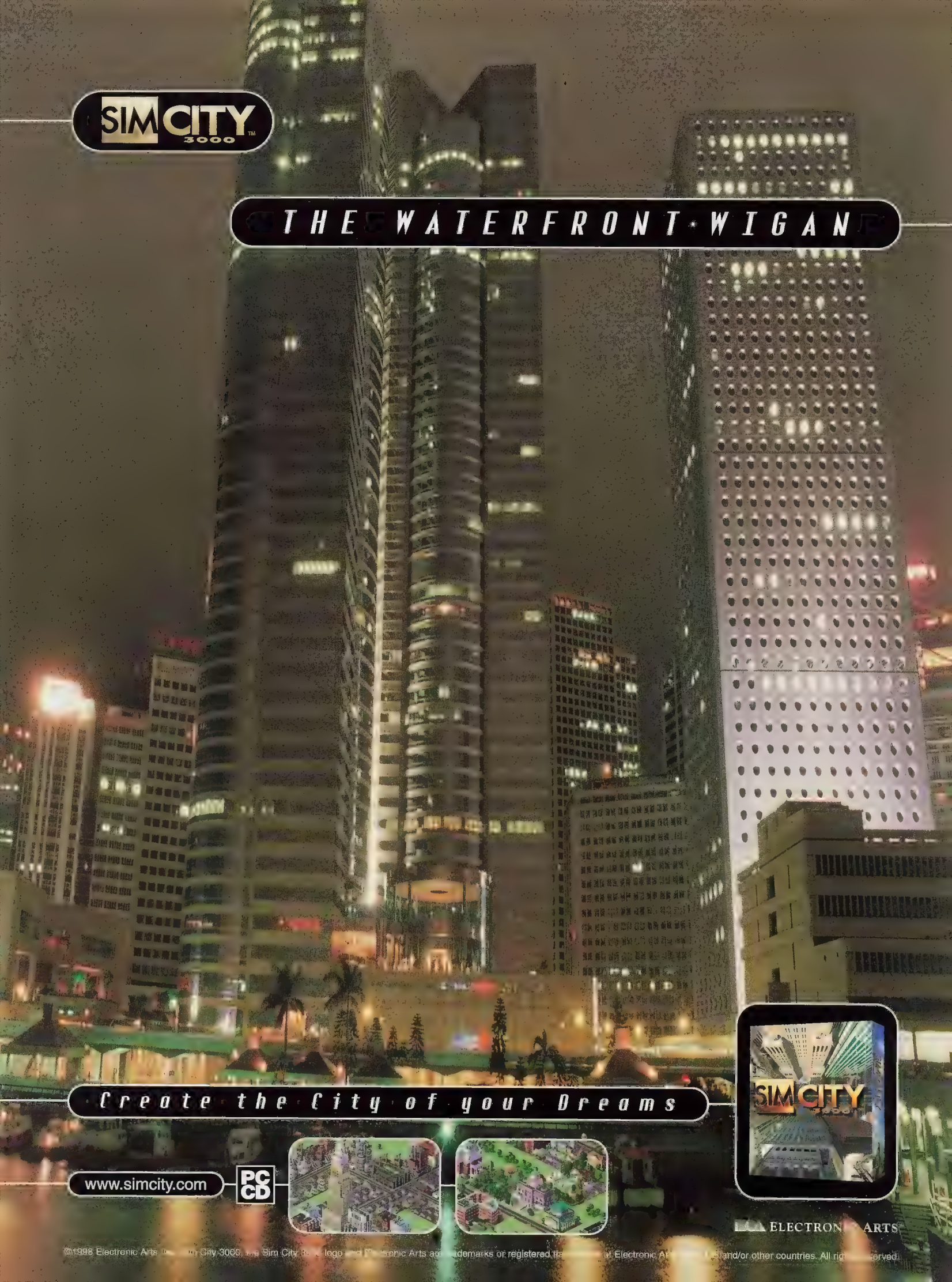
ESSENTIALS:
GSP, 01480 496575, £19.99, 1-2 players (2 on same PC), Keyboard, Mouse, Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 Minimum PC: 486 16Mb RAM, Dual-speed CD, SVGA, SoundBlaster compatible, Advanced Graphics Support: None

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★



©1998 Electronic Arts. SimCity 3000, the SimCity 3000 logo and Electronic Arts are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts in the U.S. and/or other countries. All rights reserved.

The clock slowly ticks, sweat pours from your brow, you're feeling tired, then suddenly...

I've spent much of the last month crawling round a wrecked tractor factory, trying to make as little noise as possible, while listening for the faintest sounds that might tell me just where those stinking SS are hiding. Yes, I've been obsessively playing Close Combat III – and very good it is too.

It's one of the few wargames I've ever played on a computer where you start to sweat when you have to cross that patch of open ground, wondering just who – or what – might be lining up for a shot at you.

Or where you really can feel some of the terror and nervous exhilaration of trying to sneak into the perfect position for a shot at a Tiger tank with your flame-thrower, before the tank commander notices you and trains his machine guns – or, if you're really unlucky, his 88mm cannon – on you.

It's also one of the few games I've ever come across where the troops you control act realistically. Leave a rookie squad exposed in the open, and you'll find its members carefully sneaking towards what they consider to be better cover. And when your battle-hardened mortar men have fired off all their bombs, they're quite capable of grabbing their rifles and heading off to give a hand to their mates.

But while I loved it, I have to admit that there are bound to be gamers out there who will find Close Combat III as dull as ditchwater – because it's one of those games where absolutely nothing can happen for immensely long periods of time. So much so, that it's possible to go off and make a cup of tea, returning 20 minutes later to find nothing has changed.

In fact, I deserted my men for an hour and a half at one point to have supper, but all was still quiet on the Eastern Front when I got back.

As far as I'm concerned, that's part of the appeal. It's a bit like Disneyworld: you have to queue for 90 minutes, otherwise you can't possibly enjoy the two-minute-ride properly.

It's also part of the realism. If you look at most wars, you'll find that they consist of hours, days – even months – during which nothing apparently happens and time seems to be going very slowly. Then there are minutes when every weapon owned by all involved seems to go off at once, and time seems to have speeded up. Obviously, it wouldn't be possible for every computer wargame to accurately reflect this weird elasticity of time. An operational or strategic level game simply wouldn't be playable in 'real time' (assuming, that is, that the phrase means that Game Time equals Elapsed Time in the real world – which, of course, it doesn't in most so-called real-time games).

But when you're dealing with a small unit, even a man-to-man combat situation, then how time is handled becomes a crucial factor in the enjoyment of the simulation – a point which Microsoft's programmers have obviously realised.

Martin Croft

Comments or questions on strategy & wargaming? Write to Martin or email him on pcgw_mail@zd.com

RoboRumble

A mechanical pow-wow on Mars

Oops... there goes my entire squadron

Attempts to colonise Mars fail with the discovery of an enormous alien gun pointing directly at Earth. And worse, the Martians are coming back the following year to fire it. How does mankind go about preparing themselves for annihilation? Does it take the gun apart perhaps? Oh no no no, that would be too easy! Instead we get these two corporations to build robots to fight one another in order to see who builds the best kit for attacking aliens. Hmm. You elect to play one of the organisations, and then compete in missions which involve building as many robots as you have funds for, and sending them off across a 'post-apocalyptic, industrial Mars environment' to take out the enemy base. The impressive 3D engine renders the robots and terrain, and you can view the actions from any angle, so RoboRumble certainly does look impressive. There are lovely explosions, shadows, tri-linear filtered textures (3D-acceleration is a wonderful thing!) but, like the recent remake of Asteroids, scratch the surface and there's very little underneath. No real skill is needed to complete the levels, which although difficult, are only made so because you are vastly outnumbered and out-resourced. So, like many strategy games of this ilk, it quickly degenerates into a mindless battle of attrition. Game designers, please note this observation: too much time spent on graphics, too little on game play.

Mat Peck

ESSENTIALS:
Interactive Magic, 01344 409399, £29.99, 1-4 (2-4 via TCP/IP), Mouse, keyboard, Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 Minimum PC P133, 16Mb RAM, 2Mb SVGA graphics card, Quad-speed CD, Windows Native Soundcard, Advanced Graphics Support: MMX, D3D, 3Dfx, PowerVR, ATI Rage Pro, nVidia RIVA 128, DirectX5

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★

Western Front

What a way to fight a war...

LABEL: Empire
TELEPHONE: 0181 343 7337
WEB: www.empirestrategy.com
DEVELOPER: Talonsoft
PRICE: £39.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-16 (2 via modem, null modem, email or on same PC, 2-16 via LAN or Internet)
DIFFICULTY: Advanced
AGE RATING: ELSPA 11+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P133 **Minimum RAM** 32Mb **CD** Quad-speed **Graphics** 16-bit colour **Sound** Windows-compatible **Control** Keyboard, mouse **Advanced Graphics Support** None

A word in your shell-like: Artillery fire needs careful plotting. Top right: Full statistics are available in game. Bottom right: Commanders improve in ability as campaigns progress – provided they win!

As turn-based wargames go, Western Front is both the most significant such recent release and something of a disappointment. It's the sequel to last year's Eastern Front, which uses Talonsoft's new engine. While Western Front eliminates many of the flaws of its predecessor and is vast in scope, it squanders the opportunity to develop the series and ultimately produces merely more of the same.

Apart from the detailed graphics – which greatly aid the identification of units – and terrain that many a table-top wargamer would die for, Western Front is at heart a hex-grid and counters wargame. It's an impression enhanced by the AI's inability to handle the facing of armoured units – it is suggested that this feature be disabled when playing the AI as it gives the human player too much of an advantage. That's a serious fault in an era of under-gunned Allied tanks whose only chance against a group of Tigers is to take them out from behind.

Units are represented at the platoon level – small groups of riflemen, support units and armour – which means some of the larger scenarios take a considerable time to assimilate before play. Scenarios have different complexity ratings. At the easy end you'll have only 20 units to handle, but at the other extreme scenarios can involve over 500 units. Throw in the need to understand the capabilities of each of the hundreds of different types of unit – especially given the absence of unit data in the UK manual, but which is present in the US edition – and you can appreciate the scope and detail of this game. Large battles need more than the minimum P133 to process moves quickly – start thinking PII 300 or faster.

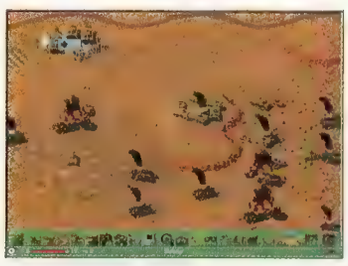
Battlefield maps range from the compact, such as the fight for the bridge at Arnhem, to vast tracts of desert in which it is all too easy to lose track of elements of your commands. Judicious use of close-up isometric 3D mode and normal 2D mode, plus the jump map, is vital to maintain control and to plot indirect fire.

The interface is largely instinctive, although the toggle for fire and movement inevitably leads to units moving when you intend to fire and vice versa. Indirect fire follows the logical procedure of clicking on the unit and then on the target hex, but air attacks require you to click the target hex first and then on the air attack button. Indirect fire also only requires you to have another unit that can see the target hex – radio contact doesn't enter into the equation.

The game is at its best in multiplayer. Playing against the computer is limiting and will teach you little about tactics. In common with the Battleground games, the AI can neither mount a co-ordinated attack nor hold a position against a player who can manoeuvre troops and mass them at the weak points. There is no modelling of higher organisation morale, such as companies, battalions and brigades. The result, even in the campaigns where preservation of units is vital, is often a bloody fight to the finish rather than the more realistic breaking and routing of an opponent.

Though fans of Eastern Front will immediately take to Western Front and should not be disappointed, there is little here in terms of wargaming advances. Also be aware, as I quickly found out, the game exhibits some reluctance to work with certain kinds of CD and DVD drives.

Ian Marsh



The Germans get a taste of Honeys

Perform well and garner medals

PROS: In-depth modelling of unit statistics, vast scope

CONS: Limited AI tactical range, slow, UK manual inadequate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★

Close Combat III: The

The look of Lvov

LABEL: Microsoft
TELEPHONE: 0345 002000
WEB: www.microsoft.com
DEVELOPER: Atomic Games
PRICE: £34.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-2 (2 via serial link, modem or Internet)
DIFFICULTY: Intermediate
AGE RATING: ELSPA 11+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P133 **Minimum RAM** 32Mb **CD** Quad speed **Graphics** SVGA **Sound** DirectX 6 compatible **Control** Keyboard, mouse **Advanced Graphics Support** None

Reduce to three units? Don't despair if one is a heavily armoured KV-1. It's awesome

Nail-biting suspense is rather short on the agenda of most wargames, but Close Combat III: The Russian Front delivers it by the barracks-load. I haven't felt this on edge since I first led the Russian Guards in a glorious counterattack or fought tooth and nail for the Tractor Factory in my first games of Avalon Hill's classic Squad Leader.

The comparison is intentional. Close Combat III captures the very essence of Squad Leader while dispensing with the need for voluminous rule books and, in fact, a human opponent.

Uniquely among wargames, Close Combat III's AI puts up a competent attack and defence and makes the single-player version a real challenge. While, ultimately, the AI may lose, its tanks, infantry and support weapons work together when trying to assault a position or defend an objective.

The real-time action is nicely balanced: the scale of most actions is such that the number of units is easily manageable even when the action hots up. Part of that is down to the instinctive interface – I picked up how to move and fire units in mere minutes. Careful planning before a battle is essential, both by understanding the capabilities of your units and by analysing the terrain and battlefield objectives – decisions during play will very much boil down to making minor adjustments to your plan as circumstances dictate.

Close Combat III severely punishes the concept of making a general advance across the battlefield. Do it and your resources become overstretched and the units harder to manage. The real-time environment encourages you to attack key sectors in strength while maintaining a thinner defence elsewhere, and soon teaches the importance of having reserve units as even initially successful units begin to break and run as the enemy counterattacks.

Tactically, the AI seems sound. It's as blind to enemy positions as you are when fog of war is on

USE THE FORCE

Battles (left) provide a good troop mix but very little flexibility in the unit roster. Operations (centre) provide fewer basic units, but the extra requisition points really change the flavour of each battle. Campaigns (right) are a particularly tough challenge: requisition points are scarce and you have to fight over more maps with fewer men

Russian Front

Fighting in buildings is dirty, confusing work

Effective ranges and line of sight are easily judged

and scouts out the terrain using half-squads of recon infantry before sending in the main force. For a while, say five, even 10 minutes, it may seem that nothing is happening, but then objective points will gradually wink out and change sides and the storm will break. After several games the long silences build up an incredible feeling of tension and suspense – unlike most other wargames where the timing and nature of the hammer blow is often all too apparent.

Combined arms attacks are hard to master. If you're not careful, armour can outstrip its infantry supports and infantry can leave its heavy weapons behind, leaving the armour vulnerable to anti-tank weapons and assaults by rather vicious combat engineers. Isolated infantry will find themselves severely outgunned in a firefight. While it's tempting to move units at top speed to reach an objective quickly, doing so reduces their ability to observe the enemy, and in the case of infantry will exhaust them quickly – as will having them crawl over long distances.

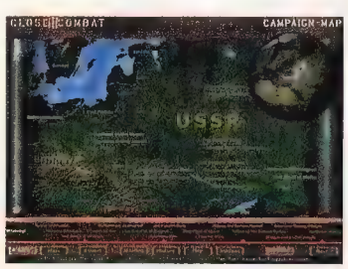
Try ordering a platoon to crawl forward when it's in the midst of a firefight and you'll get an abrupt 'We're busy' in heavily accented English (you can choose to hear the comments in Russian or German). Russian anti-tank riflemen will respond with 'Its armour iz too theeck' when you try firing them at almost any tank. And there's a Private Fraser-esque 'We're doomed' from panicking troops.

Above all, morale plays a vital part. Squads under too much pressure will break and run or surrender. Others will ignore orders and advance from defensive positions to take a crack at the enemy. Judicious positioning of extra platoon leaders makes all the difference between conscripts running from the fight or holding on despite their losses.

Campaigns and operations extend the game's horizons even more, switching the emphasis from balanced battles to multi-map encounters where conservation of men and materiel is paramount. Have a platoon break in one battle and it'll need resting and be unavailable for the next. Lose your experienced units, and you'll be reduced to using conscripts, who are far more brittle. There again, handle conscript units well and you'll see them grow in ability. Lose too many units and you'll find you have too few requisition points to replace tanks and the like, leaving yourself wide open to counterattack.

Close Combat III's squad-level scale won't suit anyone who wants to fight big battles and its real-time nature is inappropriate for anyone who wants time to ponder their every move – a luxury that no real general ever had. But it focuses the mind clearly on planning and executing an attack or defence rather than on the mechanics of the rules, it treats the morale and conservation of units as paramount, and it is full of suspense. In my book that makes it an absolute cracker of a wargame.

Ian Marsh



Smoke comes in handy to screen units forced to present a flank

PROS: Instinctive interface, smart AI, focus on men and morale

CONS: Scale inappropriate for large battles

RELEASE DATE: 19 February

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Myth II: Soulblighter

Kitchen sink included

LABEL: GT Interactive
TELEPHONE: 0171 486 5099
WEB: www.bungie.com
DEVELOPER: Bungie Software
PRICE: £39.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-8 (2-8 via modem/LAN PCPIP/Null modem or Internet)
DIFFICULTY: Advanced
AGE RATING: ELPSA 15+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P166 **Minimum RAM** 16Mb **CD** Quad-speed **Graphics** DirectX-compatible **Sound** DirectX-compatible **Control** Keyboard, mouse **Advanced Graphics Support** D3D, 3Dfx

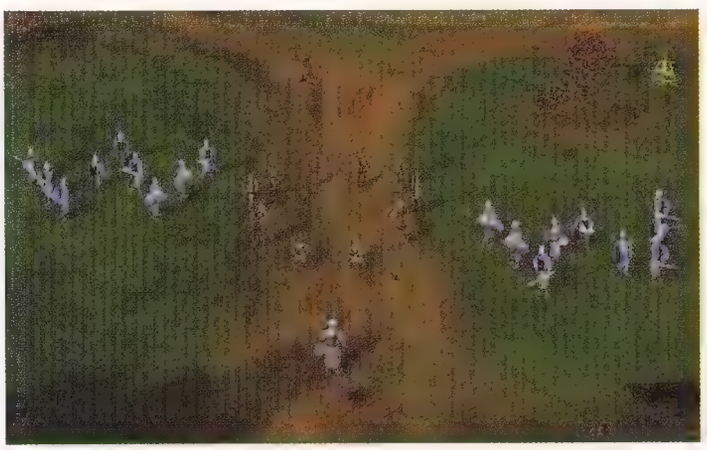
Storming the beach leaves you open to enemy cannon fire as well as enemy troops

Whatever you may think of Evil, you've got to admire its tenacity. No sooner do you cast it into the pit of oblivion and trade in your sword for pruning shears than it's right back again, leering at you from the bottom of the garden. Time to leave your roses and get back into the front line, the old enemy has returned and it's nastier than ever.

Sixty years have passed since the original struggle of Myth but the previously peaceful land is once again rife with rumour of sinister activities. Townsfolk have reported the dead rising from the grave and bands of brigands are roaming the countryside.

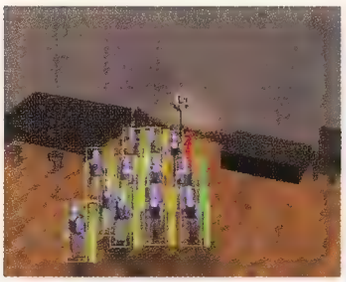
Alric, the defeater of the Fallen Lords, is now King, and you, in control of a small force, are dispatched to investigate.

With Myth II: Soulblighter, Bungie Software has developed both the real-time game engine and graphics without losing the feel of the original. Landscapes are now even more varied and animated than before and, along with the original warriors, dwarfs, archers, thrall and soulless, a whole host of new units have been included to advance the tactical balance of the game. Unfortunately most of the new units are on the side of Soulblighter so, for 'advance the tactical balance' read: how the hell am I supposed to do this with 10 men?! – very, very tough.



The troops couldn't hide how impressed they were with Captain Cruniac

New enemies and some surprising new allies feature in your campaigns



A tranquil country scene with a dead body in the distance. Nice place, but I wouldn't want to live here

As well as a handy tutorial, the first few missions let you familiarise (or refamiliarise) yourself with the various abilities of your troops before you begin encountering an increasing flow of foes. Every level offers a new and different challenge to test your leadership skills to the limit, and the new enemies – Mauls and Myrkridia in particular – are a tactical nightmare to overcome. There are castles to breach, beachheads to storm, tombs to rob, and even one or two old locations to revisit on your campaign.

Controlling Myth II is almost identical to its previous incarnation, but the original system has been supplemented by a mouse-only control interface. Formations and unit orders (for using special weapons or abilities), as well as camera panning and scrolling, can now be adjusted or manipulated without ever having to touch the keyboard. Beneath the game screen a row of commands can be pressed to instruct your troops to halt, scatter and so on, and beside that a row of formation symbols saves you having to remember whether five on the keyboard was box or shallow encirclement. A further enhancement is a directional arrow which appears when you move your troops on the landscape – handy for anyone who found keeping their troops facing the enemy a slightly fiddly problem in the original game.

Lose the 'r' and you'll find out what fright these ghosts will give you

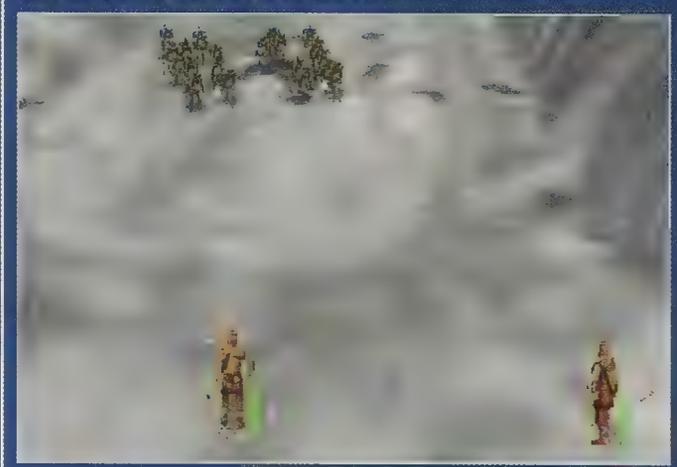
Myth II advances both the content and challenge of the original and, combined with the Fear and Loathing utilities, will provide endless hours of ghoul-smashing fun. It's a tough sequel though, and the temptation to tamper with the gameplay might, on the one hand, spoil your enjoyment of the game while, on the other, open up unforeseen avenues of creativity. It's rare for a game to demand not only skill but also willpower. Do not give in to the dark side… too soon.

Gordon Barrick

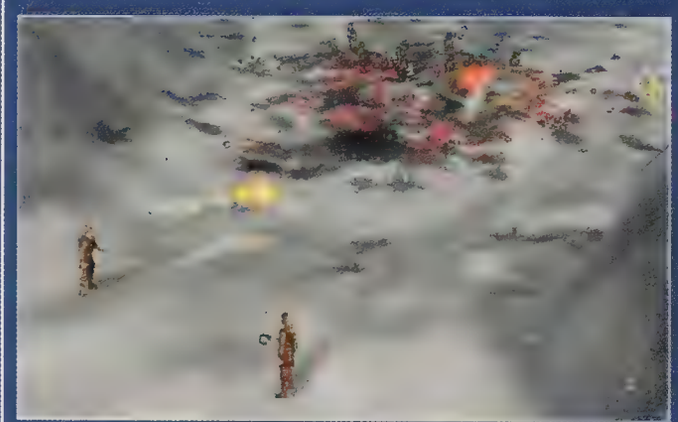
FEAR AND LOATHING

Included with Myth II: Soulblighter are two editing tools named Fear and Loathing. These handy utilities bring a whole new dimension to the game. Loathing allows you to alter the game levels in any way you desire or create your own from scratch. So, if any level is proving particularly hard, you can change the landscape to suit your men or even move them closer to their destination. Or, if you've ever had the urge to create your own levels for network play but are not fluent in binary coding, Loathing's interface makes the entire process child's play.

Fear allows you to change the characteristics of any person, monster or object within the game by accessing their code files. Want ducks instead of dwarf0s? You've got it. Want the enemy to fight on your side? No problem. Every aspect of the character physics can be altered in as big or small a degree as you think fit, and you can have hours of fun just seeing what your tinkering has done to the game. A word of warning though: changing your archers so that they shoot fireballs instead of arrows has a devastating effect on the enemy but, unless you get everyone else safely out of the way, you may end up with nothing more than one lonely archer and a pile of bloody limbs that were once your troops. I know I did.



Uhoh! A whole brigade of Thrall versus two archers. Ouch



Aha! Fireball archers! Looks like you're going to need a new army mister!

PROS: Myth II has everything, quite literally: a fresh challenge and the ability to make your own games. How much more do you want?

CONS: The desire to cheat your way through the game could be overwhelming

RELEASE DATE: 9 February

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Boxing games are like buses, you wait years then three come at once...

Have you ever noticed that films on certain subjects tend to come out in batches? Remember the Vietnam craze in the late 1980s? The volcano craze a couple of years ago? Or the current fixation with angels and after-life romantic experiences? Watch out for a flood of ocean liner disaster movies...

The computer games market is no different. What was the last boxing game you remember on PC? Exactly. However, adding extra punch to this year's sports line-up we find not one, but two boxing titles definitely slated for release with rumours of a third in the pipeline. The first contender in the ring will be Prince Naseem Boxing from Codemasters. It features the Sheffield shocker himself, alongside Slick Eddy Ellis, Bruce 'The Shadow' Chan and more. It looks like a very comprehensive game too, with three distinct types of play – World Championship simulation, all-out arcade boxing in single matches, and a management mode.

A unique character animation routine is being used which doesn't rely on motion capture. Instead it takes textured 800-polygon wire-frame character models and manipulates them using so-called Dynamic Node Skeletons, which move a boxer's body at key joints including the knee, wrist, neck and elbows, and applies essential movement physics to the rest of the body to create life-like animation at high speed.

According to Codemasters: 'Where motion capture techniques require the manipulation of massive amounts of data and, if used in boxing, would require up to 30 frames of animation for a straight punch, Prince Naseem Boxing creates complex, high-explosive, trick-shot-style punches in around eight frames. This ensures the gameplay experience delivers the correct level of balance between speed of play and player control.' That's what they say. We've included some of these animations on this month's cover disk so you can judge for yourself. My only question is: shouldn't the game now be called Prince Naseem MBE Boxing?

Later this year Electronic Arts will be hoping for a hit with Knockout Kings, which lines up 38 frightening heavy poppers. These include Sugar Ray Leonard, Muhammed Ali, Evander Holyfield, Oscar De La Hoya, and others including Spinks, Holmes and Hagler. Our own Lennox Lewis is also featured.

While Naz is being developed here in the UK, Knockout Kings is being trained in the USA, and Sugar Ray and De La Hoya are on hand as consultants. Real boxing arenas will be used and the major stars will have their signature moves recreated. We've only seen screenshots for Knockout Kings, and it's not due until September, but it certainly looks interesting.

Finally, rumour has it that JVC is developing a version of its old Playstation title Victory Boxing – it never rains...

Alan Dykes
Comments or questions on sports games? Write to Alan or email her on alan_dykes@zd.com

Ski Racing Extreme Edition

Not exactly the cutting edge

Onward and downward for the skiing... and the gaming

It's that time of the year again, but if you can't afford to go skiing maybe your PC can help out. Ski Racing Extreme Edition features the return of American womens' supremo Picabo Street as your guide and mentor over four main events – Downhill, Super G, Slalom and Giant Slalom, and a combination series. The real featured ski resorts are Aspen and Vail in Colorado, Mt Bachelor in Oregon, Whistler in Canada, Garmisch in Germany, and Val d'Isere in France. There are also two freestyle skiing areas with over 5,000 acres of off- and on-piste action on a pair of invented mountains, Dynamix and Sierra.

All the real resorts and the Dynamix freestyle mountain were available in the first version of the game, so the only new experience in this release is the Sierra mountain. Unfortunately, although we originally criticised the first version for not having a freestyle option – now that it's been implemented we found it pretty boring.

There are plenty of skiing options including weather which can be set at clear, overcast or snowing, with wind varying from calm to strong and your skiing surface varying from slush to hard-packed snow. Reasonable Force Feedback support adds atmosphere and a touch of realism.

It's nearly a year since we reviewed this game's predecessor and little has moved on since then. Meanwhile, others have. Compare the graphics and playability here with, for example, ESPN Xgames Pro Boarder (reviewed last issue) and it looks extremely dated. It might be fun for competitive skiers with Force Feedback sticks, but it will be unsatisfying for most others.

Mike Allen

ESSENTIALS:
Sierra, 0118 920 9100, £34.99, 1-8 players (2-8 via same PC, IPX LAN, Internet), Keyboard, Joystick, Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98, Minimum PC P90, 16Mb RAM, Quad-speed CD, SVGA, Soundblaster and compatibles, Advanced Graphics Support: D3D

DIFFICULTY: Easy

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★

NBA Live 99

A clean sweep for EA Sports

LABEL: EA Sports

TELEPHONE: 01753 549 442

WEB: www.easports.com

DEVELOPER: EA Sports

PRICE: £39.99

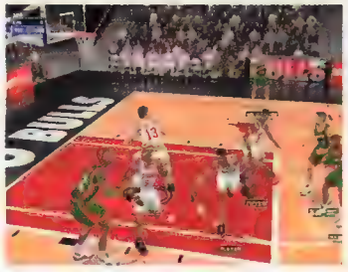
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-8 (2-4 via same PC, 2-8 via modem, serial link and LAN)

DIFFICULTY: Easy

AGE RATING: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P166 **Minimum RAM** 32Mb **CD** Quad-speed **Graphics** DirectX 6-compatible **Sound** DirectX 6-compatible **Control** Gamepad, Gravis GrIP, joystick, mouse, keyboard **Advanced Graphics Support** D3D, 3Dfx



It's jam time. Left: Improved AI on both sides makes all the difference

It's happened again. After a year of football frenzy EA Sports has not only excelled itself with a new FIFA, but its other titles have also swept the board with five stars all round. And NBA Live 99 doesn't let the team down.

NBA Live 98 was 3Dfx'd all the way and was no slouch in the gameplay department. This year, NBA Live 99 has significantly improved game AI and fully 3D face-modelled players who look frighteningly realistic. Rather than simply mapping each player's mugshot onto a flat face, this time the whole head is modelled in full 3D. The effect is astounding, and with the different body builds each player is instantly recognisable. Coupled to this is motion-captured movement of the utmost detail, and with more characteristic jinks than before.

While this provides exquisitely fluid graphics, the real surprise comes when a big basket is scored. The faces of the player's react, smiling, shouting and even blinking, all the while pumping their arms to keep the animated crowd on their feet. Similarly, when the stress builds the frowns begin to show. Together with the best play-by-play commentary in the business and virtual stadia detailed from floor timbers to roof lighting, the atmosphere is tremendous.

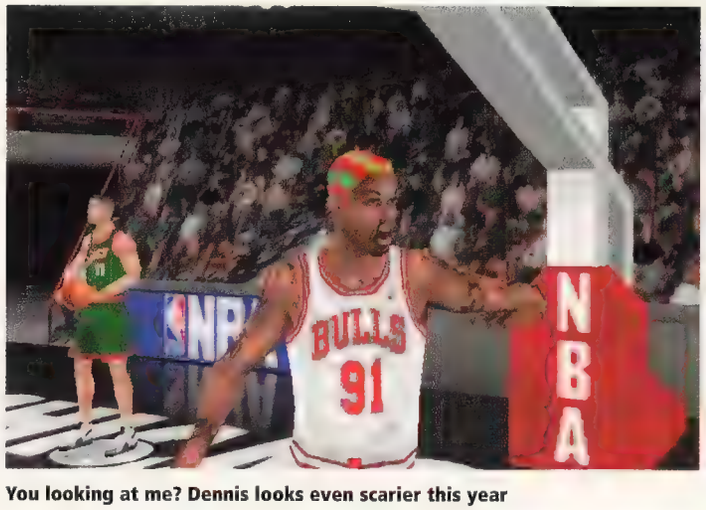
In addition to the aesthetic improvements, the long-term strength of this update is in the gameplay, bolstering EA Sports' position on-court. Not only does it look and sound impressive, but the AI has been toughened up considerably. It's no longer a matter of steaming up the key for an easy lay-up. The defence is solid, and you have to take full advantage of the new plays to stand any chance against the Bulls on Superstar level.

On offence the computer will leap ahead if there is a player mismatch on D. Intelligent use of the clock, including time outs and winding it down to the wire, also make the game much more believable than the previous version.

For fantasy leaguers, it is now possible to carry a team through several seasons. Trying to beat Chicago's roll is now feasible, but certainly not easy. Not only are the stats carried over from year to year, but the players age too. There's even a statistics calculator for creating your own bizarre categories to quantify your players' performances as you please.

NBA Live 99 is a significant advance on previous versions and leads the sports simulation pack by lifting the realism stakes to a new level. By making the players really human, the game is far more evocative and a truly immersive on-court experience. With a simple, no-holds barred arcade mode and excellent multiplayer support this remains the ultimate in PC hoop-action.

Kenji Takeda



You looking at me? Dennis looks even scarier this year

Warm up those dunks in the backyard during practice mode

PROS: Gone are the days of cloned players, these guys not only look unique, but play like it too

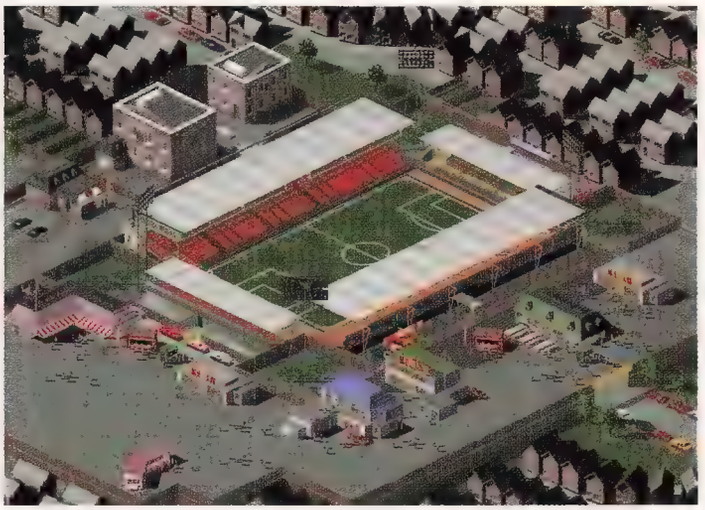
CONS: Player-switching does not cycle, and still no Jordan

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ultimate Soccer Manager Season 98/99 Edition

Going Dutch



Prepare to transform your stadium into a temple of football

Impression's Ultimate Soccer Manager 98 was one of last summer's finest managerial efforts and won plaudits for its depth, realism and humour.

Now Ultimate Soccer Manger Season 98/99 Edition is upon us. How will it fare in the brave new managerial world of 1999?

The new features begin with a few cosmetic, but pleasant changes to the interface and some additional match commentary. The first major structural innovation is the addition of the Dutch League, which adds more depth and makes shopping for hulking defenders like Jaap Stam a lot easier. And the most important addition is the new 98/99 roster with fully updated teams and squads. As ever, these seasonal updates are always welcome and can breathe new life into a game, because nothing beats controlling your favourite club with their current playing staff and full complement of the latest superstar signings.

But while Ultimate Soccer Manager 98/99 is a decent enough add-on for a very playable management game and the upgrade is discounted for existing USM fans, overall, there have been few really radical changes from last year's model.

More recent titles like EA's flawed, but addictive, FA Premier League Manager and Anco's excellent Player Manager are more likely title contenders for wannabe Big Rons. And Champ Manager 3 is just seconds away…

John Houlihan

ESSENTIALS:
Sierra, 0118 9209100, £29.99 (£14.99 for existing USM owners), 1-8 players (2-8 via same PC) Keyboard, mouse Age Rating: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 Minimum PC: P90, 16Mb RAM, Dual-speed CD, SVGA, Windows-compatible soundcard Advanced Graphics Support: None

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★

3D Hunting: Grizzly

Shoots you, sir?

And the score at half time: Vicious Woodland Creatures 1 Men with Guns 0

Who knows why these things sell in droves in the Americas? Whatever, they – or certainly at least this – doesn't deserve to do so over here. This is indeed grizzly stuff.

Being charitable the gameplay is rudimentary. First find your bear. Then shoot it. Each environment – and there are four of them – consists of a vast flat area of land with a few protruding humps and the odd lake which is then enclosed in a perimeter.

Using what looks like a degraded version of the Rise Of The Triads engine, the game plys a creaky combination of sprites and 3D models. Low resolution – a mere 640x480 – mean the textures look ragged and the bears are so uncaringly built that each constructive polygon can be identified at a glance.

To track down of few of the bears on each environment, endless scouting across acres of terrain is required. Since this is rather tedious you are given the help of a large hound – though unfortunately it has the AI of a brussels sprout. Its only real use is as an alternative bait. Once found you have a choice of four weapons to use when taking down your grizzly – a bow, a .45 ACP Handgun, a .30-338 lever-action rifle and a .375 bolt-action rifle – all of which inflict similar damage so there isn't a distinct appeal to any of them.

Once you've bagged your bear, what next? Well… you could go trekking for another 20 minutes and bludgeon another harmless creature. Then again you could go shopping for shoes.

Gareth Gower

ESSENTIALS:
Macmillan Digital Publishing, www.3dhunting.com, £19.99, 1-2 players (2 via modem, LAN or Internet), Keyboard, mouse Age Rating: ELSPA 15+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 Minimum PC: P120, 16Mb RAM, Quad-speed CD, SVGA, Windows-compatible soundcard Advanced Graphics Support None

DIFFICULTY: Easy

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★

TICK TICK BOOM

ARMAGEDDON - The last battle between GOOD and EVIL on the Day of Judgement.

WORMS - Sneaky little blighters with a bad attitude who couldn't care less about any day, let alone the last one!

Now, open a new can of WORMS! It's the biggest. It's the best. And it's packed full of Goodies (and Baddies!). Whether it's Single Player, Multiplayer or slithering across the Internet, this is the KILLER BIG PINK ONE - all the add-ons, all the features and a multitude of ultra fun-tastic play modes: THIS IS THE ULTIMATE WORMS GAME

Worms Armageddon: Humorous; Annoying; Innovative; Emotional; and most of all it's pure Gameplay.

TEAM17

worms.team17.com www.team17.com

MICROPROSE

www.microprose.com

WAKE UP! IT'S TIME TO DIE!

CD-ROM

Worms Armageddon ©1998 Team17 Software Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Published by Team17 Software Ltd. Distributed and marketed by MicroProse Ltd. TEAM17 & WORMS ARMAGEDDON are trademarks or registered trademarks of Team17 Software Ltd. MICROPROSE is a registered trademark of MicroProse Ltd or its affiliated companies. All other trademarks are the property of their respective holders. Original concept Andy Davison.

The Golf Pro 2

The sultan of swing

LABEL: Empire

TELEPHONE: 0181 343 7337

WEB: www.empire.co.uk

DEVELOPER: In-house

PRICE: £24.99

NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-64 players (2-8 via same PC or IPX LAN, 2-64 via Internet tournament)

DIFFICULTY: Easy

AGE RATING: ELSPA All Ages

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Installation Win95/Win98 **Minimum PC** P133 **Minimum RAM** 16Mb **CD** Quad-speed **Graphics** SVGA **Sound** Soundblaster and compatibles **Control** Mouse **Advanced Graphics Support** None

Practice Lesson
BEGINNER
Rough
DIST 172 Yds
If the ball is below your feet the ball will tend to travel to your right, so, you'll have to aim left to compensate.
The Golf PRO

Get tips on technique, ball management and swinging style from Gary Player in the tutorial

It's a dodgy admission to publish in a nationally distributed magazine, but I have, on occasion, watched the TV series *Ballykissangel* on a Sunday evening. Not every Sunday evening, mind! Anyway, a few months ago one of the central characters took delivery of a PC and proceeded to load none other than The Golf Pro and play it. A beautiful bit of product placement and no mistake. So the folks at Empire know their marketing – the thing is, they're not afraid to be a bit cynical about it either as The Golf Pro 2 demonstrates.

The Golf Pro originally featured great graphics, *the* most realistic control method ever applied to a sports game, two golf courses and a tip-top tutorial from South African Gary Player. The Golf Pro 2 also features the above but with just one course, instead of two. Other slight changes include network and Internet multiplay modes as standard (a post-release patch for the original) and a tournament mode for up to 64 players (with four in a round). Oh, and slightly better menus. Those are the only differences. A new game worthy of a '2' addition to the title, or an expensive add-on disk? You decide. Funnily enough, when you start to install, you're told that the original game has been detected and would you like to upgrade it or install the Golf Pro 2 separately? Hmm...

Having said that, the new course is none other than Wentworth, one of the UK's best (and most expensive) rounds. I've never trodden the blades at this distinguished course, but I'm reliably informed by a friend that it's a very good likeness. Unfortunately, it's not the most exciting PC course in the world, but it provides a solid round with plenty of birdie opportunities, and it can catch you off guard in places. Be sure to have a lesson from Gaz to get you up to scratch, bearing in mind that The Golf Pro 2 still only features mouse control – there isn't a tri-click swing meter in sight.

The Golf Pro 2 is officially priced around £24.99, but I'll bet you can get it for a lot less if you look around, and indeed, if you have a Web connection, you can get it directly from Empire's Online Shop for £14.99 plus p&p – strangely enough the price of an average add-on disk. This particular package raises the price to well over £40 for just three courses, but perhaps that's the price you have to pay for the Rolls-Royce of golf sims.

Alan Dykes

Hurry up! You haven't got all day, you know

PROS: The top-of-the range golf course. This time featuring action from Wentworth

CONS: Contains about as much new stuff as would an add-on

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★ ★

prepare for a daring manoeuvre

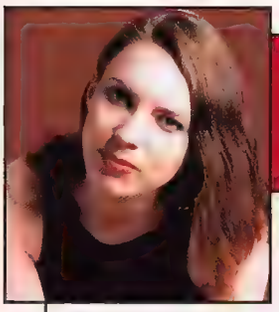
In the near future, we'll be launching a title that's going to drive you wild with ecstasy. So prepare yourself for something very special. And try to keep a grip.

Survival of the fastest. Coming soon

PC CD

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

www.eidosinteractive.co.uk



If you didn't find it in your stocking at Christmas, now's your chance to get a soul

The run-up to Christmas turned out to be a good time for adventures and roleplaying games, with Grim Fandango, Fallout 2, King's Quest: Mask of Eternity and Baldur's Gate all arriving for review. Admittedly, Baldur's Gate didn't make it on to the shelves before Christmas because the folks at developer BioWare were determined to iron out all those annoying little bugs.

The good news, though, is that it has finally been released, and is already selling like hotcakes. I'm eagerly awaiting my own boxed copy as I write, even though I know it will play havoc with my social life, not to mention my quest for a six-pack at the gym!

Baldur's Gate should keep most roleplayers happy for a good month (if you can complete it any quicker than that, you've obviously got way too much time on your hands!), and don't forget that BioWare is planning to release extra add-on quests in time.

But further into the future, there's plenty more to look forward to. In January I was invited to Sheffield to look at Gremlin's new roleplaying epic, Soulbringer, which is due for a summer release. Most of the good roleplaying games over the past couple of years have been American, so it's really refreshing to see something of Soulbringer's quality being developed here in Britain.

Soulbringer will be a little different from games such as Baldur's Gate because you control only one character. But the epic size (it's reported to be five times the size of Gremlin's previous fantasy effort, the overlooked Realms Of The Haunting), countless sub-quests and constant character development, mean that it should appeal to the same audience.

The great thing is that most of the team are real roleplaying enthusiasts. Producer Don Kirkland has played scores of pen-and-paper roleplaying games, from Dungeons & Dragons to the more recent Ars Magica (Atlas), and has also enjoyed playing the Ultimas, Fallout, Diablo and even the ancient dungeon games Rogue and NetHack. Designer Paul Green is another Ars Magica enthusiast and also worked on Realms Of The Haunting, while the rest of the team have notched up hundreds of roleplaying hours between them.

It's not a particularly derivative game, however. It has a decidedly different look from other recent roleplaying games, with sombre, moody graphics which capture perfectly the game's dark fantasy feel. It's also blessed with an innovative, user-friendly combat system which will be simple enough for even the most cack-handed player to master, leaving him or her to get on with the more important process of thinking and planning. Check out the preview on page 18, and see why this should be one of the best home-grown titles this year.

Cal Jones

Comments or questions on adventure & roleplaying games? Write to Cal or email her on cal_jones@zd.com

Dark Side Of The Moon

Just another brick in the wall?

What is the secret of Luna Crysta?

Forget it, ageing Pink Floyd fans. The 1970s are over and this isn't the game of the album. It's an interactive movie about a frontier mining colony in the Cepheus star system.

You play Jake Wright, inheritor of a claim from your dead uncle. Arriving at the colony you're determined both to collect what's yours and find the truth about his death. Throw in a dozen shady characters and a bucket of high-tech gadgets and you've got the basis for a decent game.

Dark Side has a strong storyline. It's well written, capably acted, and has enough twists and turns to keep you hooked. This is just as well, because it's not particularly impressive technically. There are a few neat special effects, including some smart morphing sequences, but most of the time the combination of people and computer-generated backgrounds looks wooden.

Everything else is adequate. The interface includes a video digital assistant for collecting clues and replaying sequences you've forgotten, as well as a competent inventory and automapper. The puzzles and combat sequences are integral to the mystery and are not just used to break up the action. There's even a downtrodden race of singing aliens.

Although plot and characters are strong, the gameplay is rarely surprising and there are too few technical innovations. The pick-your-response conversation system is boring, the node-based exploration is old-fashioned, and there's too much movie and too little interaction.

The X-Files game showed what can be achieved on low-spec PCs. Dark Side isn't as groundbreaking or as exciting, but it will appeal to sci-fi fans looking for a good yarn.

Gordon Houghton

ESSENTIALS:
South Peak Interactive, 01895 456700, www.southpeak.com, £34.99, Mouse, Age Rating: ELSPA 15+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 Minimum PC P166 with 220Mb HD space, 32Mb RAM, Eight-speed CD, 2Mb SVGA, DirectX-compatible sound card Advanced Graphics Support: None

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

★ ★ ★

Tom Clancy's RAINBOW SIX

Around the World, terrorist threats are on the rise - and this time they're attacking the world's most famous landmarks!

It's up to you: organize, plan and execute your attack! Choose to observe your hostage rescue team takedown the terrorists. Or play your friends with new multi-player modes and levels!

With five new, challenging missions, two new in-depth training levels, four new operatives, three new weapons, and true-to-life special forces action pulled directly from Tom Clancy's best-selling novel!

MISSION PACK: EAGLE WATCH

NEW MISSIONS! in REAL-WORLD LOCATIONS!

TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE SOFTWARE

Red Storm ENTERTAINMENT

Original Registered Version of Rainbow Six Required.

©1998 Red Storm Entertainment Inc.

Distributed by Take 2 Interactive Software. All Rights reserved. Take 2 Interactive Software, Hogarth House, 29 - 31 Sheet St. Windsor, Berkshire,SL4 1BY. © 1998 Red Storm Entertainment Inc. www.take2games.co.uk www.redstorm.com

RE-RELEASES

COMPILATIONS

STAR WARS: X-WING TRILOGY

(LucasArts, £29.99, ★★★)
Out Now
Comprising the original X-Wing, its follow-up TIE Fighter and the more recent, multiplayer oriented X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter, this pack should please *Star Wars* admirers. The first two titles still hold up well in the simulation stakes, even if they are knocking on a bit and the graphics have depreciated somewhat. X-Wing Vs TIE, however, still looks fresh, although it's worth bearing in mind that it has little in the way of gameplay to offer those without a LAN or Internet connection

THE FULL WORMAGE

(MicroProse, £29.99, ★★★★)
Out Now
Unique gameplay experience in which you take turns to blast, mine, shoot and generally maim each other's worms. Good as a single-player collection, a fabulous experience for a group of players – with a few drinks, naturally – gathered round the same PC. Includes Worms United, Worms Reinforcements, Worms 2 and Worms Pinball!

WORLD OF COMBAT 2000

(NovaLogic, £29.99, ★★★★)
Out Now
First-class compilation featuring the action-packed F-22 Raptor and Comanche 3, as well as the ground-based action and strategy of Armored Fist 2. Both Raptor and Comanche are pitched more at the action end of the realism spectrum, and are exciting, good-looking games on that basis. Armored Fist 2 is a little more suspect, but a reasonable stab at a tank simulation overall. Two-and-a-half classy titles at a fair price – recommended

SCREAMER INJECTION

(Virgin, £29.99, ★★★★)
Out Now
Comprising of Screamer, its sequel Screamer 2 and last year's Screamer Rally, this pack has plenty to offer the arcade racing fan. The original, which bore a resemblance to Ridge Racer when it was released, is still fun, though now looks dated. The gameplay also lacks balance, since the learning curve is far from smooth. The sequel is massively better both in terms of variety of courses and opponent AI. This was a classic game on release, and still holds up well now. Rally, the third of the trilogy, is the only one to offer 3D support. Gameplay is similar to Screamer 2, but the longer courses make it gruelling to play in championship mode. A good collection, especially if you have one of the slower Pentiums

ACTION: HALL OF FAME

(Interplay, £24.99, ★★★★★)
Out Now
Action fans can't really go wrong with this compilation, which includes Carmageddon, MDK, MechWarrior II: Mercenaries and Interstate 76. Carmageddon's success speaks for itself: the controversial game sees you smashing rival drivers off the road, squishing pedestrians and cows and earning style points in the process. Sick, but funny. MDK, in which you guide your power-suited hero through an alien 3D landscape, is a great, fast-paced action game with much to offer. Mercenaries isn't just an add-on for Mech 2 but a game in its own right, and fans of hulking robot games will lap it up. Finally, Interstate 76, while graphically sparse, is great fun: a mission-based combat driving game set in the 70s, and featuring Dukes of Hazzard-style chases, dodgy haircuts and funky sounds

OVERLOAD

(Gremlin, £29.99, ★★★)
Out Now
This is a curious compilation, since the three games have nothing in common bar the fact they're from the same company. Premier Manager 98 is the most successful, being one of the best football management games around. However, this has been lumped in with Motorhead, a decidedly average driving game, and Men In Black – a good but not outstanding action adventure based on the titular movie

SIMULATION

HIND

(Sold Out, £4.99, ★★★★)
Out Now
A thoroughly detailed hardcore simulation of the most formidable Soviet frontline helicopter gunship – known as the Bogeyman to Nato pilots. Includes 16-player network support (even mixing it with Apache Longbow), and a diverse campaign structure with over 100 missions. Still quite passable graphically – and excellent value

1944: ACROSS THE RHINE

(Sold Out, £4.99, ★★★★)
Out Now
MicroProse's tank simulation offers plenty for World War II aficionados to get their teeth into. It has a strong strategic element, so while you start off lumbering around the battlefield in your own tank, you can get yourself promoted enough times over a campaign that you end up controlling a whole regiment. Graphically dated, but cheap at the price

ACTION

GEX 3D: ENTER THE GECKO

(Classique, £12.99,★★★)
Fun and relatively inventive platform action which makes good use of the 3D environment in the character moves and the multiple camera views. Gex himself is an appealing character. For a lizard. Decent animation, voices by Leslie Philips and a good balance between puzzles and reflex action make this a very playable budget platformer

RESIDENT EVIL

(White Label, £9.99, ★★★★)
Late January
Taking inspiration from games like Alone In The Dark, Resident Evil is a gory 3D, third-person action adventure set in an isolated mansion populated by zombies and other nasties. Outstanding for its tense atmosphere, Resident Evil will make you jump, although sometimes the action is a little frustrating

RAYMAN

(Classique, £12.99, ★★)
Out Now
Ubi Soft's perfunctory platformer is nothing out of the ordinary, although it's a fairly enjoyable romp for younger, less demanding players. It looks well, though

STAR WARS: SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

(LucasArts Classic, £14.99, ★★)
Out Now
Disappointingly lacklustre game from the normally unbeatable

RE-RELEASES

LucasArts. The graphics are not quite as good as we've come to expect, and the action is lightweight and unsatisfying. Even at budget price, it's doubtful that anyone but the most ardent *Star Wars* fanatic would view this as a good buy

POD GOLD

(Classique, £9.99, ★★)
Out Now
Ubi Soft's futuristic racing game didn't cause much of a stir when it first appeared, and even when the Gold update came around (which includes 3D card support) it failed to raise much interest. A pedestrian game that remains pedestrian even at a tenner

STRATEGY & WARGAMING

SIMCITY 2000

(EA Classics, £14.99, ★★★★★)
Out Now
Building and running a city may not sound like the most exciting basis for a game, yet anyone who has played this classic will know how wrong that assumption is. Starting with a small amount of money, you have to create a place people want to come and live in, arranging residential, commercial and industrial zones plus infrastructure, and watch it grown into a metropolis. The whole thing is strikingly addictive, even though there's no specific overall goal. It still looks nice too, despite its age. Excellent

COMMAND & CONQUER

(EA Classics, £14.99, ★★★★★)
5 February
Westwood's seminal real-time strategy game hasn't aged too badly, and is a fantastic bargain here. Playing either the good guy GDI or the aggressive NOD, you have to command tanks, aircraft and ground troops while building installations for your base and harvesting precious Tiberium. The AI is a little suspect, but that aside, this is a gripping game which hasn't gained a loyal following for nothing. Buy this now

WARCRAFT: ORCS & HUMANS

(Sold Out, £4.99, ★★★★★)
Out Now
Although now superseded by WarCraft II, this classic original real-time strategy title still holds its own. Playing either medieval humans or warlike Orcs, your job is to pit your forces against the enemy and manage your resources over two dozen campaign scenarios. The graphics are basic, but the game has a lot of charm. At this price you can't fault it

THIS MEANS WAR

(Sold Out, £4.99, ★★★)
Out Now
MicroProse's answer to Command & Conquer wasn't especially scintillating. Set post-Apocalypse, you have to battle a series of crazed megalomaniacs from different nations (cue: lots of bad acting in the video cut-scenes) much as you would in any other real-time strategy game. Poor AI and a clunky interface let it down. While it's not bad for the price, if you haven't played C&C, get that instead

GREAT BATTLES OF ALEXANDER

(Blue Byte Classics, £9.99, ★★★★)
Out Now
Walk in the footsteps of Alexander – and trample his enemies into the dust. Nicely animated units liven up a traditional hex-gridded wargame, whose strength lies in one-off battles rather than campaigns. Great fun when it came out – and now even better value

ADVENTURE & RPG

THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND

(LucasArts Classic, £29.99, ★★★★★)
Out Now
This classic adventure seems hardly old enough for re-issue. The long-awaited finale of the Monkey Island trilogy sees Guybrush Threepwood once again in danger from the ghost pirate Le Chuck, and in big trouble with his fiance Elaine Marley, whom he has inadvertently turned into a statue. Curse features some of the best 2D graphics and animation you'll see outside of a cinema, plus all the usual brain-teasing puzzles and warped humour. Pricey, perhaps, but a must have

MISCELLANEOUS

VIRTUAL SPRINGFIELD

(Fox Interactive, £9.99, ★★★★)
Out Now
Simpsons fans will love this 'virtual' tour of the popular family's home town. You can visit all the locations you've seen on TV and meet the weird and wonderful characters who live there. It's fairly amusing, although once you've seen and done everything, you'll find it loses its charm pretty quickly

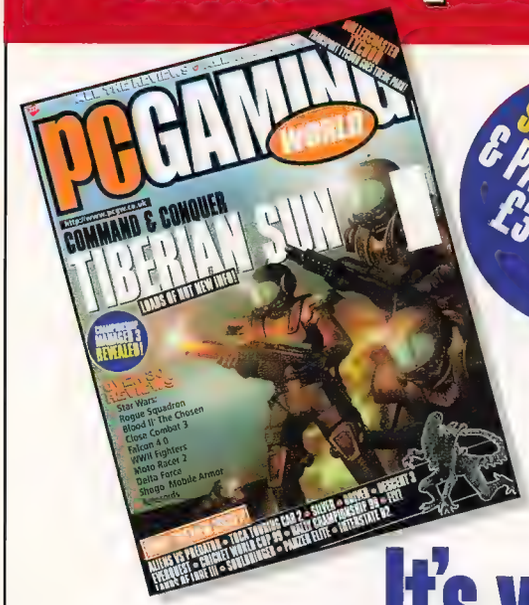
ADVERTISING INDEX

BT Wireplay	121	www.wireplay.co.uk
Cendant Software	9	www.sierra-online.co.uk
Demon Internet	49	www.demon.co.uk
Eidos	107,OBC	www.eidos.com
Electronic Arts	75,95	www.ea.com
Guillemot	113	www.guillemot.com
Hasbro	105	www.hasbro.co.uk
Intermediates	6	www.special.reserve.co.uk
MicroProse	IFC	www.microprose.com
Microsoft	41	www.microsoft.com
Microids	42,43	www.microids.com
Midas	10	www.gamesarena.com
One Stop Direct	16,17	www.onestopdirect.co.uk
Psygnosis	4,35,39	www.psygnosis.co.uk
Take 2	12,13,109	www.take2interactive.com
UR Wired	47	www.urwired.com
Yamaha	29	www.yamaha.co.uk
Wolfcat	93	www.wolfcat.co.uk
Zablac	IBC	www.zablac.co.uk

REVIEWS INDEX: FEBRUARY

SIMULATION		
Ultra Fighters	70	★★★
WWII Fighters	72	★★★★
Combat Pilot No.1 (Attack) Squadron	74	★★
Concorde	74	★★★
African Safari	75	★★
Falcon 4.0	76	★★★★
Top Gun: Hornet's Nest	77	★★
ACTION		
Star Wars Rogue Squadron	78	★★★
Blood II: The Chosen	79	★★
Delta Force	80	★★★★
Natural Fawn Killers	82	★★
Thunder Brigade	82	★★
Asghan The Dragon Slayer	83	★★★★
Shogo: Mobile Armor Division	84	★★★
Abe's Exoddus	85	★★★★★
S.C.A.R.S	86	★★★
Barbie Riding Club	86	★★★★
Limb From Limb	86	★★
Moto Racer 2	87	★★
Test Drive 4x4	88	★★★
Fault Line for Quake II	88	★
Viper Racing	89	★★★★
CLASSICS & PUZZLES		
Stratego	90	★★★★
Scotland Yard	91	★★
Asteroids	91	★
All In One Carling Quiz Master	92	★★★★
The CD-ROM Game Of Life	92	★
Centipede	93	★★★★
Pinky And The Brain World Conquest	94	★★
Intelligent Strategy Games	94	★★★
STRATEGY & WARGAMING		
RoboRumble	96	★★
Western Front	97	★★★
Close Combat III: The Russian Front	98	★★★★★
Myth II: Soulblighter	100	★★★★★
SPORT		
Ski Racing: Extreme Edition	102	★★
NBA Live 99	103	★★★★★
3D Hunting: Grizzly	104	★
Ultimate Soccer Manager 98/99 Edition	104	★★★
The Golf Pro 2	106	★★★★
ADVENTURE & ROLEPLAYING		
Dark Side Of The Moon	114	★★★
ONLINE		
Extremities For Quake II	120	★★★★

'I WANT THE LOT FOR UNDER THIRTY QUID!'



SUBSCRIBE NOW & PAY LESS THAN £3 A COPY

It's yours,

PC Gaming World is the PC entertainment magazine with the biggest name demos, best insider news and the best reviews!

Subscribe to PC Gaming World now for just £29.97 a year and you'll receive an action-packed CD-ROM every month

❑ One year for £29.97 ❑ Two years for £54.97

❑ Cheque enclosed (made payable to PC Gaming World)

❑ Please invoice me

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

_____

_____ Post Code _____

3057

Return to: PC Gaming World, Ziff-Davis UK Ltd, FREEPOST, Leicester, LE87 4AQ

OR USE THE CREDIT CARD HOTLINE ON

01858 438803

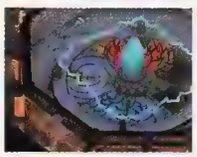
(Mon-Fri 9am-9pm Sat 10am-4pm)

*Overseas readers please add £12 per year for postage.

❑ Please tick if you do not want to receive money saving offers from other companies

RECENTLY ★★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Here's a selection of recently reviewed titles that received our highest recommendation



BALDUR'S GATE

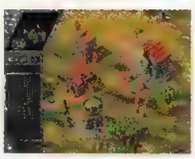
Interplay (Adv/RPG) Reviewed: Xmas/New Year issue

Enormous, epic, extrordinary. The party-based roleplaying game returns in style. Easily the best roleplaying game since Ultima VII Part 2 – way back in 1993... We've been waiting years for something this good

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

Eidos (Action) Reviewed: Xmas/New Year issue

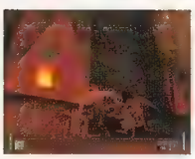
Highly engrossing and enjoyable spin on the first-person shooter. From out of the shadows of a cluttered genre, sneaks a genuine original. Here the emphasis is on playing smart, not hard, and on stealth rather than strength



THE SETTLERS III

Blue Byte (Strat/War) Reviewed: Xmas/New Year issue

Offers a level of strategic strength and minute detail rarely seen in real-time strategy games. Demands patience, planning and strategic thinking. So many things seem just right you'll find yourself coming back for more and more



HERETIC II

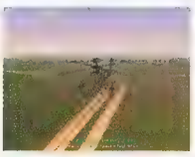
Activision (Action) Reviewed: Xmas/New Year issue

Using the Quake II engine, Raven has created a masterpiece. In depth and immersiveness this third-person perspective action game is – Half-Life excepted – without parallel. You get glimpses of what Tomb Raider III could have been

ACTUA SOCCER 3

Gremlin (Sports) Reviewed: Xmas/New Year issue

Extremely entertaining, good looking and intensely engaging festival of football. Perhaps not as polished as FIFA 99, but fantastically playable and arguably more addictive. Great in multiplayer mode



APACHE HAVOC

Empire (Simulation) Reviewed: Xmas/New Year issue

A formidable helicopter sim debut that matches Longbow 2 in every respect and surpasses it in many. It manages to be a delight to fly without becoming over-complicated. A beautifully rounded package

HALF-LIFE

Sierra (Action) Reviewed: January 99 issue

Cutting-edge first-person shooter with plot! Valve's masterpiece can lay claim to being the game of 1998 – and one whose influence on other developers will be as lasting as the game is to play. An essential purchase

GRIM FANDANGO

LucasArts (Adv/RPG) Reviewed: January 99 issue

A delicious confection of Mexican myth and film noir, with what's perhaps the sharpest most entertaining script ever written for an adventure. Simply the best adventure to come out of LucasArts

OTHER RECENT ★★★★★ RELEASES

Here's a selection of other recently reviewed titles that received our highest recommendation

Title	Publisher	Game Type	Reviewed
FIFA 99	EA Sports	Sports	January 99
Fallout 2	Interplay	Adv/RPG	January 99
Madden NFL 99	EA Sports	Sports	January 99
Railroad Tycoon II	Take 2	Strat/War	January 99
Caesar III	Sierra	Strat/War	January 99
Wargasm	Infogrames	Action	January 99
NHL '99	EA Sports	Sports,	December 98
Klingon Honor Guard	MicroProse	Action	December 98
Colin McRae Rally	Codemasters	Simulation	November 98
Hardwar	Gremlin	Simulation	October 98
Final Fantasy VII	Eidos	Adv/RPG	September 98
X-COM: Interceptor	MicroProse	Simulation	September 98
TA: The Core Contingency	GT Interactive	Strat/War	July 98
Unreal	GT Interactive	Action	July 98
World Cup 98	EA Sports	Sports	July 98
Starship Titanic	Zablac	Adv/RPG	June 98

The Phoenix has Landed

Maxi Gamer Phoenix™

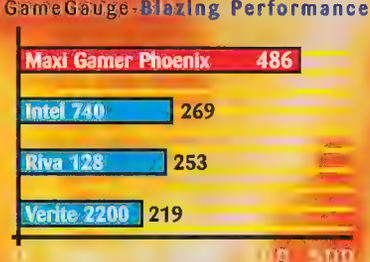
Guillemot's Maxi Gamer Phoenix brings the next generation of graphics after Voodoo2™. This Voodoo Banshee™ based 2D/3D card delivers world fastest 2D and scorching 3D.

Fire up your games and business presentations as never before. Experience the Power of

Phoenix.

Key features of the Maxi Gamer Phoenix

- √ Industry first 128-bit VGA, 100 MHz single-cycle Windows GUI Acceleration
- √ High-resolution : up to 1600X1200 in 32 bit with a vertical refresh rate of 120 Hz
- √ Voodoo2™ technology developed by 3Dfx Interactive® Inc.
- √ Ultimate 3D experience with 100 Mpixels/sec, 100 Mtexels/sec & 4 Million triangles/sec.
- √ No-compromise 3D image quality at high frame rates with 16MB RAM on board.
- √ Compatible with all games developed for Voodoo™ technology.



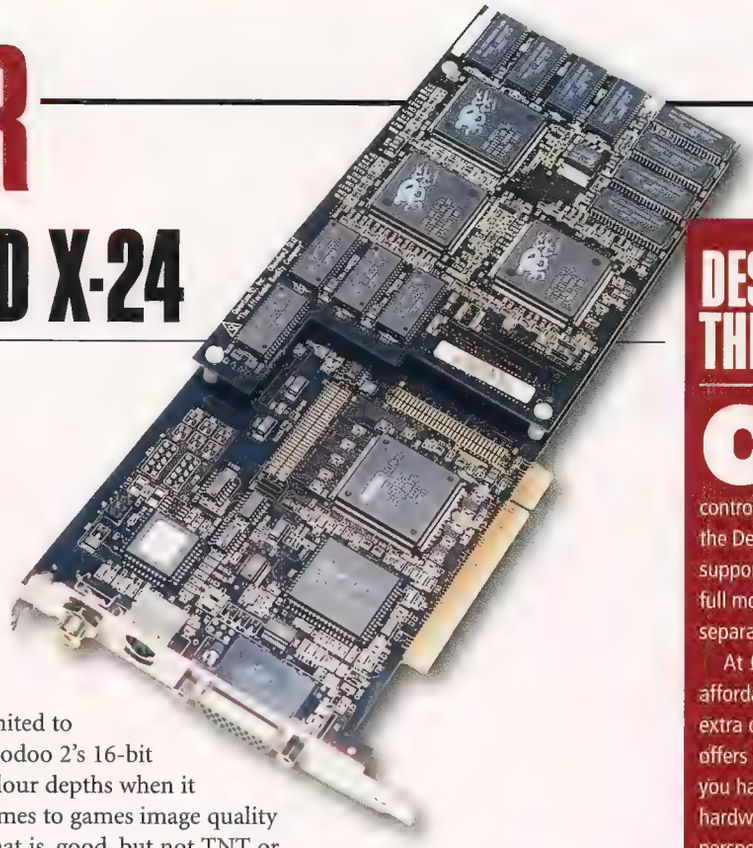
Performance based on a PII-400 system, all competitive numbers recorded from CGW, Voodoo Banshee score run and recorded at 3Dfx with Alpha1 drivers.

WIN A MAXI GAMER PHOENIX AT OUR WEB SITE: www.guillemot.com

GUILLEMOT INTERNATIONAL, GI, MAXI GRAPHICS & MAXI GAMER PHOENIX ARE TRADEMARKS OR REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF GUILLEMOT INTERNATIONAL. VOODOO2™ AND VOODOO BANSHEE™ ARE TRADEMARKS OF 3DFX INTERACTIVE®. ALL OTHER TRADEMARKS AND/REGISTERED TRADEMARKS ARE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS. GUILLEMOT INTERNATIONAL. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. COMPARISON CHART.
GUILLEMOT SALES: 0181 944 1940. WEB SITE : WWW.GUILLEMOT.COM

TOP GEAR

QUANTUM 3D X-24



Possibly the single most desirable and utterly lovely piece of PC games hardware we've seen in the past year. Think twin 12Mb Voodoo 2's mounted on a single silicon-encrusted board, running in SLI with dedicated drivers, tweaks and all sorts of enhancements. And finished in a rather nice black, too.

Performance is staggering, as SLI always is, assuming you have the CPU to shunt polygons through fast enough – say a PII or K6-2 400. You can expect Quake II rates well in excess of 60fps at 1,024x768 and some thoroughly stupid figures if you run OpenGL and D3D games at lower resolutions. True, when you start hitting frame rates in the hundreds and above it all becomes a bit academic. Bottom line is that there's nothing faster.

The pass-through cable is more than adequate, quality-wise, although you're naturally limited to Voodoo 2's 16-bit colour depths when it comes to games image quality (that is, good, but not TNT or G200 quality).

Unfortunately, at nearly £200 more than two separate (and only marginally slower), no-name Voodoo 2 boards it's difficult for the sane and hard-working gaming enthusiast to consider, let alone justify.

Though, of course, if cash is plentiful and you want to make your friends go green with envy, accept no substitutes.

Quantum3D
Tel: 01189 714786
Web: www.quantum3D.com
Price: £340
Pros: Staggering SLI performance, nothing faster at up to 1,024 resolutions… And it's black
Cons: The price is still prohibitive relative to conventional Voodoo 2 SLI bundles. PCI versions only
★ ★ ★ ★

DESKTOP THEATRE 5.1

Consisting of a Creative Soundworks sub bass unit, amplifier and master controller/decoder, plus five satellites, the Desktop Theatre 5.1 system supports AC3 (Dolby Digital) for the full monty left/right rear channel separation for 3D sound.

At £180, this makes it a very affordable off-the-peg way into the extra quality and features that AC3 offers for home theatre (assuming you have the necessary DVD hardware). However, from a games perspective this aspect is redundant for the immediate future. With support for Dolby ProLogic and the full Dolby Digital AC3, it's a capable all-round multi-speaker games system with decent sound balance and definition, unfortunately let down by el-cheapo speakers.

We'd argue that you'd be better with two good, quality speakers ahead of the surround gimmick on the cheap. Otherwise, it's a good system but speaker quality is a let down. Oh, and the box picture suggesting one configuration with satellites atop the monitor and two stuck to the desk legs has to be one of the silliest we've ever seen.

Creative Labs
Tel: 0118 9344322
Web: www.creaf.com
Price: £179
Pros: Decent ready to roll 5.1 system with full AC3 support
Cons: Good way into AC3 but overpriced for gaming
★ ★ ★

CYBORG 3D

The Cyborg 3D is a stylish digital flight stick with a twist grip (for rudder and so on), directional hat and throttle – and a maximum of 24 programmable fire options.

It's extremely comfortable, with a smooth, positive feel and a neat spring-centring action. True, grips are very much a matter of taste and hand size, but the Cyborg 3D goes out of its way to make things as easy as possible – allowing you to adjust thumb angle and length, as well as hand position.

What's more, it can be used in either hand since the fittings can be swapped round. A real boon for lefties struggling to find a quality flight controller.

The styling (and the name) may offend the odd flight sim purist, but no matter. This is an excellent general purpose flight stick – well made, well featured and well priced – and a worthy competitor to Microsoft's ubiquitous Sidewinder.

Saitek
Tel: 01454 855050
Web: www.saitek.com
Price: £49.99
Pros: Attractive general-purpose digital stick, with a good action and an innovative design for maximum comfort. Support for left hookers
Cons: Not any to mention
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

KILLER RIGS

TWO RECIPES FOR THE ULTIMATE GAMING MACHINE

It's quite simple really. If you said 'here's a blank cheque, put yourself together a top-of-the-range gaming system', then this is what we'd go out and buy.

The 'no holds barred' system demonstrates some common sense. You won't see an extra £300 spent on a component that, although nice to have, would make no difference to the system's overall *games* performance.

The second, 'lean 'n' mean' configuration follows the same pattern, only now your blank cheque has a caveat: make it a quality gaming system to be proud of, but keep it cheap.

What could be simpler? The specifications are checked and updated every month.

NO HOLDS BARRED

SuperMicro's new motherboard wins on performance and features, but sadly the utterly lovely Quantum3D X24 SLI has to make way for the infinitely better value of a Voodoo 2 bundle.

Component	Product	Price	Web
Motherboard	SuperMicro P6SBA	£92	www.insight.com
CPU	Pentium II 450	£429	www.intel.com
Memory	256Mb PC100 RAM	£270	www.insight.com
Disk controller	Built-in UDMA 33	NA	NA
Primary graphics	Matrox Mystique G200 16Mb	£120	www.matrox.com
Secondary graphics	Techworks Power3D Voodoo 2 (SLI bundle)	£148	www.techworks.co.uk
Floppy drive	Teac 3.5" 1.44Mb	£23	www.teac.com
Hard drive	14.4Gb IBM Titan UDMA	£288	www.uk.ibm.com
CD/DVD-ROM	Pioneer DVD RomAO3 IDE	£146	www.insight.com
Backup	Iomega Zip (100Mb internal)	£81	www.iomega.co.uk
Monitor	Nokia 445XI Plus (21" FST)	£782	www.nokia.com
Audio	Sound Blaster Live!	£120	www.soundblaster.com
Speakers	VideoLogic Sirocco	£199	www.videologic.co.uk
Modem	Pace 56K V90 Voice internal	£77	www.pace.co.uk
Case	ATX Tower	£93	www.insight.com
PSU	Built-in 250W	NA	NA
Keyboard	Keytronic KT2000	£21	www.insight.com
Mouse	MS-IntelliMouse USB	£30	www.microsoft.com
Action game controller	MS-SideWinder Gamepad	£29	www.microsoft.com
Flight joystick	Thrustmaster F22 Pro	£150	www.thrustmaster.co.uk
Throttle	Thrustmaster TQS	£129	www.thrustmaster.co.uk
Rudder/Pedals	Thrustmaster Elite Rudder	£60	www.thrustmaster.co.uk
Driving controls	MS-SideWinder Force Feedback	£123	www.microsoft.com

TOTAL £3,410

LEAN 'N' MEAN

AMD is still going strong on the processor front – pound for pound – and there are no serious competitors for the excellent TMC motherboard. However the Banshee-based 2D/3D accelerator could equally be swapped with a TNT-based card for a few more pounds. You gain a bit in performance and image quality, but lose the Glide support.

Component	Product	Price	Web
Motherboard	TMC TI5VG +	£76	www.tmc.com
CPU	AMD K6-2 400	£200	www.amd.com
Memory	128Mb PC100 RAM	£135	www.insight.com
Disk controller	Built-in UDMA/33	NA	NA
Primary graphics	Maxi Gamer Phoenix (Banshee)	£92	www.guillemot.com/uk
Secondary graphics	NA	NA	NA
Floppy drive	Mitsumi 3.5" 1.44Mb	£12	www.mitsumi.com
Hard drive	8.4Gb IBM UDMA	£152	www.uk.ibm.com
CD/DVD-ROM	Maxi DVD-ROM	£99	www.guillemot.com/uk
Back-up	Iomega Zip (100Mb internal)	£81	www.iomega.co.uk
Monitor	Nokia 447Xpro (17")	£386	www.nokia.com
Audio	Diamond Sonic Impact S90	£24	www.diamondmm.co.uk
Speakers	Labtec 2612	£71	www.labtec.com
Modem	Pace 56K V90 Voice internal	£77	www.pace.co.uk
Case	ATX midi tower	£60	www.insight.com
PSU	Built-in 235W	NA	NA
Keyboard	Generic PS/2 Win95	£13	www.insight.com
Mouse	MS-basic mouse	£18	www.microsoft.com
Action game controller	MS-SideWinder Gamepad	£29	www.microsoft.com
Flight controller	MS-Sidewinder Precision Pro	£40	www.microsoft.com

TOTAL £1,565

We have made every effort to ensure that the prices quoted here are correct at the time of going to press and that only finished retail products are included. Please bear in mind there is a lead time involved between writing and distribution of PCGW, and that the prices quoted are recommended retail from the manufacturer or direct from reputable mail order sites. Do shop around.

MULTIMEDIA

DANCING BABY CD PLAYER

Jellyfish
£12.99

I've just had a life-changing experience thanks to a dancing baby and a singer named after cafeteria food. When the Dancing Baby CD Player landed on my desk, I innocently loaded it up and set it to work on Meatloaf's Greatest Hits (yeah, yeah, it's a short album, I know). Watching this bizarre baby (you'll have seen him – it? – on Ally McBeal) do his thang to bat Out Of Hell is something I shall remember for a long time.

Play any music CD on your PC and get the baby (known as Baby Cha Cha to his friends) to dance along. You can speed him up or slow him down, depending on what you're playing – and the player controls all the other functions of your CD player as well. It's an odd thing, really, but probably worth the 13 quid for the novelty value alone. If you want more, pick up the Dancing Baby Screensaver (Jellyfish Software £12.99), which has over 150 screensavers and has a facility for creating your own customised ones. ★ ★ ★ *NM*

PATRICK MOORE'S GUIDE TO THE UNIVERSE

Fastrak
£29.99

1999 is a big year for those who have their sights set on higher things – like the sky. The big news is the forthcoming solar eclipse which is guaranteeing Cornwall's position as top summer destination. So the release of Patrick Moore's Guide To The Universe couldn't have come at a better time.

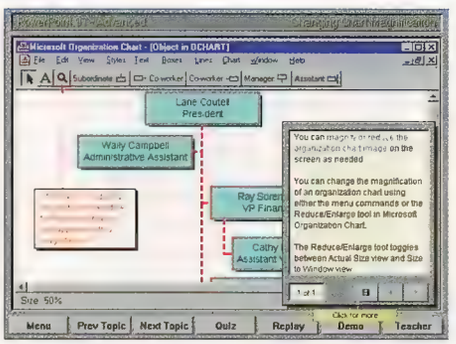
A good-looking interface offers a selection of eight planets for you to visit. Photos from the Hubble space telescope, videos including a walk on the Moon and even some puzzles to test your knowledge are included. Animated star maps will show the budding astronomer what to expect in the sky at different times.

It's a nice idea, but although it looks good, the commentary (by Patrick Moore himself) can be rather dry and dull at times. ★ ★ ★ *NM*

JAMES CAMERON'S TITANIC EXPLORER

Fox Interactive
£29.99

My attitude to the Titanic is very much 'it sank, get over it' – fliched, I admit, from a T-shirt I saw somewhere. But this three-CD package, headed by the director of last year's hit move Titanic managed to win me over. For a start, it uses the media that are at the designer's disposal – there are film clips, first-hand accounts from survivors and animations. The accounts of what happened to the 'unsinkable' ship run in chronological order, but you can easily browse and search through the information available in whatever order you wish. The interface is beautifully constructed and with footage from James Cameron's own expedition to meet Titanic in her final resting place on the bottom of the ocean, it's a must-have for film fans. If you're going to buy one package on the subject, make it this one. ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ *NM*



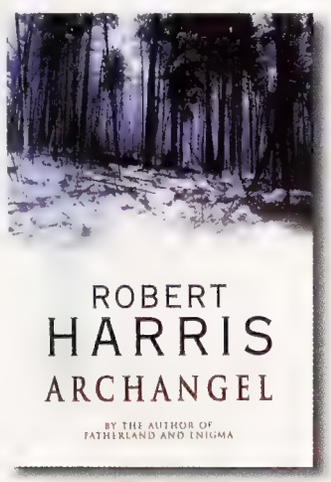
TEACH YOURSELF MS POWERPOINT 97

Focus Multimedia
£9.99

Teach Yourself MS PowerPoint 97 offers straightforward, step by step instruction to both beginner and more advanced users. Happily, it avoids the primary pitfall of some training programs. It actually tells you what you need to know to create presentations using Power Point without too much superfluous information, after all you want to get on and use the programme, not spend months in training. Perhaps the best features are the Demo and Teacher buttons that allow you to see a particular function in action and then be guided, click by click, through the same function to practise what you have learned. There's also a Quiz button that will test you on any section or topic. It's clear and easy to use and will provide useful instruction for the novice and serve as an easy reference for advanced users. ★ ★ ★ *MH*

In *Fatherland*, Robert Harris created an alternate 1964 where the Nazis won the Second World War and managed to keep the Holocaust a secret for 20 years. In *Enigma*, he set a compelling mystery story against the background of the race to break the German U-Boat codes during the Second World War. Now, in **ARCHANGEL** *(Hutchinson, £16.99)*, he turns the spotlight on Stalin.

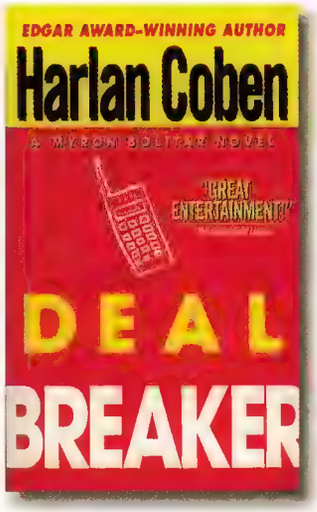
With the fall of communism and the break-up of the Soviet Union, the Russian government is throwing open once top secret archives to Western researchers. But Harris' hero, dissipated, former Oxford historian Fluke Kelso, stumbles across something extraordinary – a clue to the whereabouts of Josef



Stalin's private papers. But shadowy figures are prepared to kill in order to suppress the Soviet dictator's last testament…

It's vintage Harris, with interesting characters and a wealth of historical detail, mixed in with a healthy dose of pure escapist fantasy.

From *Archangel* to another angel – Caleb Carr's **THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS** *(Ballantine, US import, around £6.99)*. The sequel to Carr's best-seller – *The Alienist* – this again follows the adventures of pioneering psychiatrist Dr



Laszlo Kreizer and his trusted band of followers as they seek a serial killer in late 19th century New York.

Carr can certainly write, and the book is a gripping read throughout, although at times his 19th century characters talk and act in a very late-20th century style. Yet the author tries hard to keep true to his chosen period, and the most modern sounding parts – such as the scenes involving the cocaine-addicted, ultra-violent street gang, the Hudson Dusters – are frequently the very ones which are most historically accurate.

The other flaw with *The Angel of Darkness* is a very common one found with American novels these days – it's too long. It would have been a far tighter book if Carr had cut it back by a third. Even so, well worth the read.

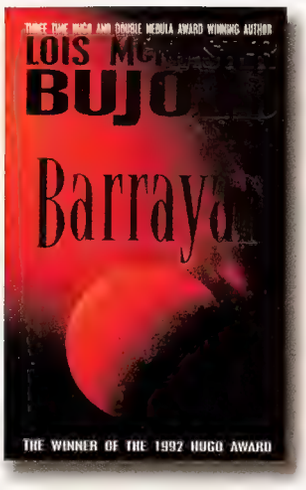
Incidentally, it is now far easier to find imported US paperbacks and hardbacks like this at reasonable prices. It used to be the case that exchange rates on books somehow became reversed, so that British book buyers were expected to pay £1.50 or so for every dollar a book would cost in the US. Now, with the revolution in UK bookselling in full swing (taking place over the past two years), US imports are priced competitively against UK books – and sometimes can be found much cheaper.

With chains like Waterstone's facing increased competition from Internet bookstores like Amazon.com (and now Amazon.co.uk), and from giant US book retailers like Borders, which bought the Books Etc chain and has now opened three UK book superstores, the book-buying public appears to be benefiting. Long may it last…

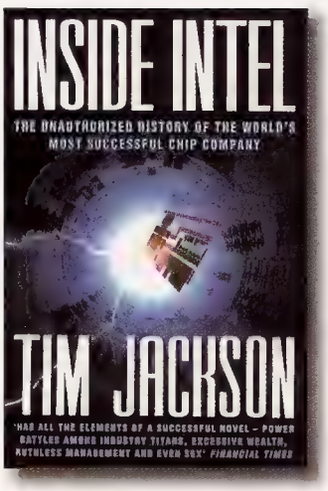
The only problem is that because of the peculiarities of the laws governing international copyright, booksellers will tend not to stock US versions of books which are also published in the UK, so direct comparison of costs is difficult.

However, it's well worth checking the shelves of the bigger book stores to see if they do have some bargain US imports. Recently, for example, I picked up two books by an author new to me, Harlan Coben. **DEAL BREAKER** and **DROP SHOT** *(Dell, US imports, around £3.95)* feature US sports agent Myron Bolitar, whose ability to protect his highly paid stars depends more on his former life as an FBI agent than his skills as a deal broker. Fast and funny, Coben's Bolitar mysteries are a real find.

Luckily, you don't always have to search out US editions of US authors – the best of them



usually end up published in the UK (eventually). I recently found Lois McMaster Bujold's **BARRAYAR** *(Pan, £5.99)*, a sort of prequel to her extremely enjoyable space opera series featuring Lord Miles Naismith Vorkosigan. Barrayar is both a useful explanation for who Vorkosigan is and why he's so hideously crippled, and a great book in its own right. It also features a feisty heroine in



Cordelia Naismith (Miles' mother) who is slow to anger but terrible when roused. And don't ask what she's got in her shopping bag…

Moving from swashbuckling space opera to high drama in the boardrooms and backrooms of Silicon Valley. Tim Jackson's **INSIDE INTEL** *(Harper Collins, £8.99)* is a fascinating account of what makes one of the most powerful companies in the world tick. (After all, how many desktop PCs contain an Intel inside?)

Gamers like us might be moved to say 'thanks for the memory', but Intel has a darker side to it which Jackson maps out with an almost obsessive attention to detail. It's quite brilliant – and the light which it throws on how Bill Gates' Microsoft got the contract to provide the operating system for IBM's first range of personal computers is fascinating. *MC*

1998 REVIEWS INDEX

Here it is. The benchmarks. The index of all the new software reviewed by PC Gaming World in 1998. Fully comprehensive. Completely excellent. And with the scores on the doors. Enjoy

Title	Label	Genre	Issue	Score
101: The101st Airborne In Normandy	Empire	Sim/Space	Issue 22	★★
20,000 Web Graphics	Focus	Multimedia	Issue 20	★★★★
3D Interior Designer 2	Europress	Multimedia	Issue 20	★★
3D Ultra Pinball: The Lost Continent	Sierra	C & P	Issue 14	★★
4,800 Sounds	Focus	Multimedia	Issue 20	★★★★
747 For Flight Simulator 98	Data Becker	Sim/Space	Issue 15	★★★
Actua Golf 2	Gremlin	Sports	Issue 15	★★★★
Actua Ice Hockey: Nagano 1998	Gremlin	Sports	Issue 15	★★★★
Actua Soccer 3	Gremlin	Sports	Issue 25	★★★★★
Actua Tennis	Gremlin	Sports	Issue 23	★★★★
Addiction Pinball	MicroProse	C & P	Issue 17	★★★★
Adrenix	Funsoft	Action	Issue 21	★
Age Of Empires: The Rise Of Rome	Microsoft	Str/War	Issue 24	★★★★
Air Warrior III	Interactive Magic	Sim/Space	Issue 16	★★
Airbus 98	The Associates	Sim/Space	Issue 21	★★
Alien Earth	Funsoft	Adv/RPG	Issue 18	★
Anno 1602	Infogrames	Str/War	Issue 24	★★★
Apache Havoc	Empire	Sim/Space	Issue 25	★★★★★
Apollo 18 – The Moon Missions	United Interactive	Sim/Space	Issue 22	★★
Armor Command	Take 2	Str/War	Issue 18	★★★
Army Men	UBI Soft	Str/War	Issue 19	★★★
Around The World	Abacus	Sim/Space	Issue 18	★★★
Axis & Allies	Hasbro	Str/War	Issue 24	★★
Babylon 5 Reference CD-Rom	Sierra	Multimedia	Issue 14	★★★
Baldies	Sold Out	Str/War	Issue 25	★★★★
Baldur's Gate	Interplay	Adv/RPG	Issue 25	★★★★★
Balls of Steel	GT Interactive	C & P	Issue 16	★★★★
Barrage	Activision	Sim/Space	Issue 24	★★★
Bass Masters Classic Tournament Ed	THQ	Sports	Issue 23	★★★★
BattleCity	Codehammer	Online	Issue 19	★
Battlespire: An Elder Scrolls Legend	Virgin	Action	Issue 22	★★
Battletech: MechCommander	MicroProse	Str/War	Issue 19	★★★★
Battlezone	Activision	Action	Issue 16	★★★★
Beast Wars: Transformers	Hasbro	Action	Issue 18	★★
Black Dahlia	Take 2	Adv/RPG	Issue 16	★★★★
Browning Duck Hunter	One Stop	Sports	Issue 20	★
Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling	THQ	Sports	Issue 23	★★★★
Buggy	Gremlin	Action	Issue 24	★★★★
Bugriders: The Race Of Kings	GT Interactive	Action	Issue 17	★★★
Bust A Move 2: Arcade Edition	Acclaim	Sports	Issue 16	★★★
Caesar III	Sierra	Str/War	Issue 24	★★★★★
Caesars Palace	Interplay	C & P	Issue 15	★★
Caesars Palace VIP Blackjack	Interplay	C & P	Issue 18	★
Caesars Palace VIP Craps	Interplay	C & P	Issue 18	★★
Caesars Palace VIP Video Poker	Interplay	C & P	Issue 18	★★
Carmageddon II: Carpocalypse Now	SCi	Action	Issue 24	★★★★
Castrol/Honda Superbike World Cham	Interactive Entertainment	Sim/Space	Issue 18	★★★
Ceremony Of Innocence	Realworld Multimedia	Multimedia	Issue 23	★★★
Chessmaster 5500	Mindscape	C & P	Issue 15	★★★★
Chessmaster 6000	Mindscape	C & P	Issue 22	★★★★
Civil War Generals II: Grant, Lee, Sherman	Sierra	Str/War	Issue 15	★★★★
Claw	Iona	Action	Issue 17	★★★★
Clouds & Textures Pro 98	The Associates	Sim/Space	Issue 21	★★
Cluedo: Murder At Blackwell Grange	Hasbro	C & P	Issue 24	★★
Codebreaker	Zablac	C & P	Issue 19	★
Colin McRae Rally	Codemasters	Action	Issue 22	★★★★★
Comanche Gold	NovaLogic	Sim/Space	Issue 18	★★★
Combat Flight Simulator	Microsoft	Sim/Space	Issue 24	★★★★
Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines	Eidos	Str/War	Issue 19	★★★★
Conflict Freespace:The Great War	Interplay	Action	Issue 20	★★★★
Conquests Of The Ages	Aztech New Media	Str/War	Issue 25	★★★
Creatures 2	Mindscape	Str/War	Issue 22	★★★★
Croc: Legend Of The Gobbos	Fox Interactive	Action	Issue 14	★★★
Cyberball	Midas Interactive	C & P	Issue 20	★★
Cyberstorm 2: Corporate Wars	Sierra	Str/War	Issue 25	★★★★
Dark Colony: The Council Wars	Take 2	Str/War	Issue 16	★★★
Dark Reign: Rise Of The Shadowhand	Activision	Str/War	Issue 18	★★★★
Dawn Of Aces	Interactive Magic	Online	Issue 24	★★★★
DC3	The Associates	Sim/Space	Issue 22	★★★
Deadlock 2: Shrinewars	Electronic Arts	Str/War	Issue 17	★★
Deathmatch Maker 2 for Quake II	Ubi Soft	Action	Issue 16	★★★★
Deathtrap Dungeon	Eidos	Action	Issue 19	★
Deer Hunter	One Stop	Sports	Issue 20	★
Demonstar	Ionos	Action	Issue 15	★★
Deo Gratias	Cryo Interactive	Str/War	Issue 25	★★
Dethkarz	Infogrames	Action	Issue 25	★★★
Die By the Sword	Interplay	Action	Issue 17	★★★
Dilbert's Desktop Games	Microsoft	Action	Issue 14	★★
Discover Astronomy	Focus	Multimedia	Issue 22	★★★
Dominion: Storm Over Gift3	Eidos	Str/War	Issue 20	★★★
Dracula	SoftKey	Str/War	Issue 18	★
Duke Caribbean	One Stop	Action	Issue 16	★★★
Dune 2000	Westwood	Str/War	Issue 22	★★★
Earth 2140	Interplay	Str/War	Issue 14	★★★★
Eastern Front Mission Pack 1	Empire	Str/War	Issue 18	★★★
Egypt 1156 BC: Tomb Of The Pharaoh	Cryo Interactive	Adv/RPG	Issue 21	★★
Emergency: Fighters For Life	ASCII Entertainment	Str/War	Issue 23	★★★
ESPN Xgames Pro Boarder	EA Sports	Action	Issue 25	★★★
European Air War	Hasbro	Sim/Space	Issue 25	★★★
F/A-18 Korea	Empire	Sim/Space	Issue 16	★★★
F-16 Aggressor	Virgin	Sim/Space	Issue 24	★★★
F-16 Multirole Fighter/MiG-29 Fulcrum	NovaLogic	Sim/Space	Issue 23	★★★★
F-22 Total Air War	Infogrames	Sim/Space	Issue 22	★★★★
F22: Red Sea Ops	Ocean	Sim/Space	Issue 19	★★★★
FA Premier League Football Manager	EA Sports	Sports	Issue 23	★★★★
Fallen Haven 2: Liberation Day	Interactive Magic	Str/War	Issue 18	★★★
Fallout	Interplay	Adv/RPG	Issue 15	★★★★
Fallout 2	Interplay	Adv/RPG	Issue 24	★★★★★
Fields Of Fire: War Along The Mohawk	Empire	Str/War	Issue 20	★★★
FIFA 99	EA Sports	Sports	Issue 24	★★★★★
FIFA Soccer Manager 97/98 Data Disk	EA Sports	Sports	Issue 14	★★★★
Fighter Pilot	Electronic Arts	Action	Issue 24	★★★
Fighting Force	Eidos	Action	Issue 16	★★★
Final Fantasy VII	Eidos	Adv/RPG	Issue 20	★★★★★
Flight Director 98	The Associates	Sim/Space	Issue 21	★★★
Fly Fishing	Sierra	Sports	Issue 21	★★★
Flying Circus	SimGuild Corporation	Online	Issue 16	★★★★
Football Masters '98	ESP	Sports	Issue 14	★★★
Football World Manger	Ubi Soft	Sports	Issue 24	★★★
Formula 1 97	Psygnosis	Action	Issue 17	★★★
Forsaken	Acclaim	Action	Issue 17	★★★★★
Frogger	Hasbro	C & P	Issue 14	★★★★
Furcadia	Dragon's Eye	Online	Issue 20	★★
Future Cop: LAPD	Electronic Arts	Action	Issue 25	★★★★
Game Net & Match	Blue Byte	Sports	Issue 19	★★★
Gangsters: Organised Crime	Eidos	Action	Issue 24	★★★★
Garden Designer 3	Europress	Multimedia	Issue 20	★★★
Gardner's World Garden Manager	BBC Worldwide	Multimedia	Issue 23	★★★★★
Get Medieval	Microids	C & P	Issue 24	★★★
Gex 2: Enter The Gecko	Ubi Soft	Action	Issue 19	★★★
Global Domination	Psygnosis	Str/War	Issue 25	★
Glover	Hasbro	C & P	Issue 24	★★★
Golf 1998 Edition	Microsoft	Sports	Issue 18	★★★★
Grand Prix 500cc	Funsoft	Action	Issue 24	★★★
Grand Prix Legends	Sierra	Sim/Space	Issue 22	★★★★
Grand Touring	Empire	Sim/Space	Issue 25	★★★
Great Battles Of Caesar	Interactive Magic	Str/War	Issue 18	★★★
Great Battles of Hannibal	Interactive Magic	Str/War	Issue 18	★★
Grim Fandango	LucasArts	Adv/RPG	Issue 24	★★★★★
H.E.D.Z.	Hasbro	Action	Issue 23	★★★
Half Life	Sierra	Action	Issue 24	★★★★★
Hardball 6	Accolade	Sports	Issue 19	★★
Hardwar	Gremlin	Sim/Space	Issue 21	★★★★
Heart Of Darkness	Ocean	Action	Issue 20	★★
Heretic II	Activision	Action	Issue 25	★★★★★
Hexen II Mission Pack	Activision	Action	Issue 19	★★★★
Hexmaker for Hexen II	Ubi Soft	Action	Issue 16	★★★★
Hexplore	Ocean	Adv/RPG	Issue 20	★★★★
History Of The World	Eidos	Str/War	Issue 16	★★★
House Of The Dead	Sega PC	Action	Issue 20	★★
iF/A-18E Carrier Strike Fighter	Interactive Magic	Sim/Space	Issue 23	★★★
iF-22 Peacekeeping Mission	Interactive Magic	Sim/Space	Issue 16	★★★
iF-22 v5.0	Interactive Magic	Sim/Space	Issue 17	★★
Incoming	Rage	Action	Issue 17	★★★
Incubation: The Wilderness Missions	Blue Byte	Str/War	Issue 18	★★★
Industry Giant	Interactive Magic	Str/War	Issue 19	★★★
International Cricket Captain	Empire	Sports	Issue 20	★★★★
Interstate '76 Nitro Riders	Activision	Action	Issue 18	★★★
iPanzer44	Interactive Magic	Sim/Space	Issue 17	★★★
Israeli Air Force	Jane's	Sim/Space	Issue 24	★★★
It's War: Muzzle Velocity	Zablac	Str/War	Issue 20	★★
I-War	Ocean	Str/War	Issue 14	★★★
Jack Charlton's Soccer Nation	Attica	Sports	Issue 20	★★
Jack Nicklaus 5	EA Sports	Sports	Issue 15	★★★★
Jane's F-15	Jane's	Sim/Space	Issue 17	★★★★
Jazz Jackrabbit 2	Black Friar	Action	Issue 17	★★
Jedi Knight: Mysteries Of The Sith	Virgin	Action	Issue 16	★★★★
Jeff Wayne's The War Of The Worlds	GT Interactive	Str/War	Issue 24	★★★★
Jet Fighter: Full Burn	Take 2	Sim/Space	Issue 22	★★★★
Jewels Of the Oracle	Iona	C & P	Issue 25	★★★★
Jimmy White's 2: Cueball	Virgin	C & P	Issue 21	★★★★
Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix Champion	Midas Interactive	Sim/Space	Issue 22	★★★
Joint Strike Fighter	Eidos	Sim/Space	Issue 14	★★★★
Judge Dredd Pinball	Pin-ball Games	C & P	Issue 19	★★★
Juggernaut For Quake II	HeadGames	Action	Issue 15	★
King's Quest VIII: Mask Of Eternity	Sierra	Adv/RPG	Issue 24	★★★★
KKND: Krossfire	Ocean	Str/War	Issue 20	★★★
Knights & Merchants	Interactive Magic	Str/War	Issue 24	★★★★
Legal Crime	Byte Enchanters	Online	Issue 19	★★★
Leisure Suit Larry's Casino	Sierra	C & P	Issue 21	★★
Lie Detector	United Interactive	C & P	Issue 21	★★
Links Five Course Library Vol 4	Eidos	Sports	Issue 18	★★★
Links LS 1999	Eidos	Sports	Issue 24	★★★★
Loderunner 2	GT Interactive	C & P	Issue 23	★★★★
Lords Of Magic	Sierra	Str/War	Issue 15	★★
Lula: The Sexy Empire	Take 2	Adv/RPG	Issue 15	★★
Lula: Virtual Babe	Take 2	Str/War	Issue 25	★★
M1 Tank Platoon II	MicroProse	Sim/Space	Issue 17	★★★★
Madden NFL 99	EA Sports	Sports	Issue 24	★★★★★
Magestorm	Engage	Online	Issue 21	★★★★

Title	Label	Genre	Issue	Score
Magic & Mayhem	Virgin	Str/War	Issue 23	★★★
Magix Live Act	Magix Entertainment	Multimedia	Issue 21	★★★★
Mass Destruction	MMG	Str/War	Issue 14	★★★
Mastermind	Hasbro	C & P	Issue 18	★★
MAX 2	Interplay	Str/War	Issue 20	★★★
Megascenery - Melbourne/Victoria	PC Aviator	Sim/Space	Issue 16	★★★
Meridian 59: Renaissance	3DO	Online	Issue 17	★★★★
Michael Owen's World League Soccer	Eidos	Sports	Issue 25	★★★★
Micro Machines v3	Codemasters	Action	Issue 17	★★★★
Might & Magic VI: Mandate Of Heaven	Ubi Soft	Adv/RPG	Issue 18	★★★
Missing in Action	GT Interactive	Action	Issue 23	★★
Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation	Ubi Soft	Sim/Space	Issue 23	★★★
Monopoly World Cup Edition	Hasbro	C & P	Issue 17	★★★
Monster Truck Madness 2	Microsoft	Action	Issue 19	★★★
Montezuma's Return!	Take 2	Action	Issue 22	★★
Monty Python's Meaning of Life	Take 2	Adv/RPG	Issue 14	★★★
More Empires	X-Treme	Str/War	Issue 24	★★
Mortal Kombat Trilogy	GT Interactive	Action	Issue 14	★★★
Motocross Madness	Microsoft	Action	Issue 21	★★★★
Motorhead	Gremlin	Action	Issue 17	★★
Music File 98	File Productions	Multimedia	Issue 14	★★★★
Nam	GT Interactive	Action	Issue 22	★
NBA Action 98	Sega PC	Sports	Issue 15	★★★★
Need For Speed III: Hot Pursuit	Electronic Arts	Action	Issue 23	★★★★
Newman-Haas Racing	Psygnosis	Sim/Space	Issue 25	★★
NHL '99	EA Sports	Sports	Issue 23	★★★★★
Nightlong	MicroProse	Action	Issue 22	★★★
Nightmare Creatures	Activision	Action	Issue 20	★★★
Notyet	MVP	C & P	Issue 20	★★
Obsidian	Ocean	Adv/RPG	Issue 20	★★★★
ODT	Psygnosis	Action	Issue 25	★★
Of Light and Darkness	Interplay	Adv/RPG	Issue 20	★★★
On The Ball 2	Funsoft	Sports	Issue 19	★★
Operation	Hasbro	C & P	Issue 24	★
Outwars	Microsoft	Action	Issue 17	★★★★
Panzer Commander	Mindscape	Str/War	Issue 19	★★★
People's General	The Learning Company	Str/War	Issue 23	★★★★
PGA Tour, Laptop Edition	EA Sports	Sports	Issue 18	★★★
Pilgrim	Ocean	Adv/RPG	Issue 16	★★
Pinball Arcade	Microsoft	C & P	Issue 24	★★★
Pinball Soccer '98	Pin-ball Games	C & P	Issue 21	★★★
Plane Crazy	Europress	Action	Issue 16	★★
Player Manager Season 98-99	Anco	Sports	Issue 25	★★★★
pod Gold	Ubi Soft	Action	Issue 16	★★
Police Quest SWAT 2	Sierra	Str/War	Issue 22	★★★
Populous, The Beginning	Bullfrog	Str/War	Issue 24	★★★
Powerboat Racing	Interplay	Action	Issue 16	★★★
Practical Food & Cookery Encyclopedia	Anglia Multimedia	Multimedia	Issue 23	★★★★
Premier Manager 98	Gremlin	Sports	Issue 20	★★★★
Pro Pinball: Big Race USA	Empire	C & P	Issue 24	★★★★
Project Airos	Ocean	Str/War	Issue 19	★★★★
Prost Grandprix	Ocean	Action	Issue 20	★
Quake II	Activision	Action	Issue 14	★★★★★
Quake II Mission Pack: The Reckoning	Activision	Action	Issue 19	★★★
Quake II Missions Pack 2: Ground Zero	Activision	Action	Issue 23	★★★
Queen: The Eye	Electronic Arts	Adv/RPG	Issue 16	★★★
RAF Collection	The Associates	Sim/Space	Issue 23	★★★
Rage Of Mages	Microids	Adv/RPG	Issue 24	★★★
Railroad Tycoon II	Take 2	Str/War	Issue 24	★★★★★
Rave E-Jay	Fast Trak	Multimedia	Issue 21	★★★
Rayman Gold: The Map Design Studio	Ubi Soft	Action	Issue 14	★★★★
Rean	Black Friar	Adv/RPG	Issue 21	★★★★
Red Baron II	Sierra	Sim/Space	Issue 16	★★★★
Red Jack: Revenge Of The Brethren	THQ	Adv/RPG	Issue 21	★★★
Redline Racer	Ubi Soft	Action	Issue 16	★★★★
Redneck Rampage Rides Again	Interplay	Action	Issue 19	★★
Redneck Rampage: Suckin' Grits On 66	Interplay	Action	Issue 17	★★
Revenge Of Arcade	Microsoft	C & P	Issue 20	★★
Ring	Cryo Interactive	Adv/RPG	Issue 23	★★★★
Rising Lands	Ocean	Str/War	Issue 18	★★★
Rival Realms	Titus	Str/War	Issue 25	★★★★
Riverworld	Cryo Interactive	Str/War	Issue 23	★★★
Rocky Mountain Trophy Hunter	One Stop	Sports	Issue 20	★★
Roland Garros '98	Grolier	Sports	Issue 22	★★★
Sabre Ace: Conflict Over Korea	Virgin	Sim/Space	Issue 14	★★
Scenery Singapore	The Associates	Sim/Space	Issue 20	★★★
Scenery Vienna	The Associates	Sim/Space	Issue 20	★★★
Sega Touring Car Championship	Sega PC	Action	Issue 15	★★
Semper Fi	Interactive Magic	Action	Issue 16	★★★
Sensible Soccer 98	GT Interactive	Sports	Issue 19	★★
Sensible Soccer European Club Edition	GT Interactive	Sports	Issue 24	★★
Sentinel Returns	Psygnosis	Str/War	Issue 20	★★★★
Seven Kingdoms	Interactive Magic	Str/War	Issue 14	★★★★
Shadow Master	Psygnosis	Action	Issue 16	★★★
Shanghai Dynasty	Activision	C & P	Issue 15	★★★
Sierra Baseball Pro 98	Sierra	Sports	Issue 14	★★★
Sierra Pro Pilot	Sierra	Sim/Space	Issue 21	★★★
Silent Hunter: Commander's Edition	Mindscape	Sim/Space	Issue 15	★★★
SiN	Activision	Action	Issue 25	★★★
Sk: Racing	Sierra	Sports	Issue 17	★★★
Small Soldiers: Globotech Design Lab	Hasbro	Str/War	Issue 25	★★★
Small Soldiers Squad Commander	Hasbro	Str/War	Issue 25	★★★★
Snow Wave Avalanche	Midas Interactive	Sports	Issue 24	★★★
Solar System Explorer	Focus	Multimedia	Issue 22	★★★★
Soldiers At War	Mindscape	Str/War	Issue 18	★★★
Sorry.	Hasbro	C & P	Issue 20	★★

Title	Label	Genre	Issue	Score
Spearhead	Interactive Magic	Sim/Space	Issue 23	★★★
Special Ops: US Army Rangers	Take 2	Action	Issue 18	★★★★
Speedbusters	Ubi Soft	Action	Issue 25	★★★★
SpellCross: The Last Battle	SCi	Str/War	Issue 21	★★
Splat! The Cat	Neeches Innovation	Str/War	Issue 22	★★★
Sporting Clays	One Stop	Sports	Issue 20	★★★
Sportsman's Paradise	One Stop	Sports	Issue 20	★
Star Trek Pinball	Interplay	C & P	Issue 16	★★★
Star Trek SFA: Chekov's Lost Mission	Interplay	Sim/Space	Issue 19	★★
Star Trek TNG: Klingon Honor Guard	Hasbro	Sim/Space	Issue 23	★★★★★
Star Wars Supremacy	Virgin	Str/War	Issue 17	★★★★
StarCraft	Blizzard	Sim/Space	Issue 17	★★★★
StarCraft: Insurrection	Aztech New Media	Str/War	Issue 22	★★★
Starship Titanic	Zablac	Adv/RPG	Issue 17	★★★★★
Stratajams	Smart Games	C & P	Issue 16	★
Streetfighter Alpha – Warrior's Dream	Virgin	Action	Issue 21	★
Streets Of Sim City	Maxis	Action	Issue 15	★★
SU-27 Flanker Sqdr Commander's Edn	Mindscape	Sim/Space	Issue 15	★★
Super Bubsy	Accolade	Action	Issue 18	★★★
Super Match Soccer	Acclaim	Sports	Issue 15	★★★★
Syrrah – The Warp Hunter	Sun Soft	C & P	Issue 14	★★★★
Takeru: Letter Of The Law Chapters	Sun Soft	Adv/RPG	Issue 14	★★★
Tamagotchi	Gremlin	C & P	Issue 15	★★
Team Apache	Mindscape	Sim/Space	Issue 19	★★★★
Tender Loving Care	Funsoft	Adv/RPG	Issue 19	★★★
Test Drive 5	EA	Action	Issue 25	★★★
The 3rd Millennium	Cryo Interactive	Str/War	Issue 18	★★
The Best Football Quiz Ever!	Europress	C & P	Issue 19	★
The Best Pub Quiz Ever!	Europress	C & P	Issue 19	★
The Fifth Element	Ubi Soft	Adv/RPG	Issue 23	★★
The Golf Pro featuring Gary Player	Empire	Sports	Issue 16	★★★★
The Journeyman Project 3	Red Orb	Adv/RPG	Issue 15	★★★★
The LED Wars	Ionos	Str/War	Issue 15	★★★
The Lost Bronx	Sega PC	Action	Issue 15	★★
The Operational Art Of War 1937-1945	Empire	Str/War	Issue 20	★★★★
The Quivering	Alternative Software	Adv/RPG	Issue 14	★★★★
The Realm	Sierra	Online	Issue 21	★★★
The Settlers III	Blue Byte	Str/War	Issue 25	★★★★★
The X-Files: Unrestricted Access	Fox Interactive	Multimedia	Issue 19	★★★
Thief: The Dark Project	Eidos	Adv/RPG	Issue 25	★★★★★
Three Lions: England's Glory	Take 2	Sports	Issue 18	★★★
Tiger Woods 99	EA Sports	Sports	Issue 22	★★★
Titanic - Adventure Out Of Time	Europress	Adv/RPG	Issue 20	★★★
Titanic – An Interactive Journey	Europress	Multimedia	Issue 20	★★
Tom Clancy's Politika	Mindscape	Str/War	Issue 14	★★★
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	Take 2	Action	Issue 23	★★★★
Tomb Raider III	Eidos	Action	Issue 25	★★★
Total Annihilation: Battle Tactics	GT Interactive	Str/War	Issue 21	★★★★
Total Annihilation: The Core Contingency	GT Interactive	Str/War	Issue 18	★★★★★
Trespasser: Lost World	DreamWorks	Str/War	Issue 25	★★
Tribal Rage	Empire	Str/War	Issue 21	★★★★
Triple Play '99	EA Sports	Sports	Issue 18	★★★★
T-Shirt Maker	Software Partners	Multimedia	Issue 21	★★
Ultim@te Race Pro	MicroProse	Action	Issue 15	★★★★
Ultima Online	Origin	Online	Issue 14	★★
Ultimate Soccer Manager 98	Sierra	Sports	Issue 17	★★★★
Unreal	GT Interactive	Action	Issue 18	★★★★★
Urban Assault	Microsoft	Action	Issue 21	★★★★
USCF Chess	Interplay	C & P	Issue 17	★★★
V2000	Grolier	Action	Issue 23	★★★★
Vangers - One For The Road	Interactive Magic	Action	Issue 24	★★★
Venezia 98	The Associates	Sim/Space	Issue 21	★★★★
VIP Classic Wings 98 - Volume 1	The Associates	Sim/Space	Issue 20	★★★★
Virgin Territories	East Valley Software	Str/War	Issue 25	★
Virtua Cop 2	Sega PC	Action	Issue 14	★
Virtual Chess 2	Digital Integration	C & P	Issue 20	★★★★
Virtual Pool 2	Interplay	Sports	Issue 14	★★★★
Voyetra Digital Orchestrator	Voyetra Technologies	Multimedia	Issue 21	★★★★
Wall Street Trader '99	Monte Cristo Multimedia	Str/War	Issue 25	★★★
Wallace & Grommit Printomatic CD	BBC Worldwide	Multimedia	Issue 22	★★★
War Wind II: Human Onslaught	Mindscape	Str/War	Issue 14	★★★★
Warbirds 3D	Interactive Magic	Online	Issue 20	★★★
WarBreeds	Red Orb	Str/War	Issue 15	★★★★
WarGames	Fox Interactive	Str/War	Issue 21	★★★★
Wargasm	Infogrames	Action	Issue 24	★★★★★
Warhammer : Dark Omen	Electronic Arts	Str/War	Issue 15	★★★★★
Warhammer: Final Liberation	Mindscape	Str/War	Issue 14	★★
Warheads	Ionos	Online	Issue 21	★★
Warlords III: Dark Lords Rising	Red Orb	Str/War	Issue 21	★★★★
Wetrix	Infogrames	C & P	Issue 23	★★★★
Whisky 98	Uniqium Systems	Multimedia	Issue 14	★★
Wild Turkey Hunt	One Stop	Sports	Issue 20	★
Wing Commander: Prophecy	Origin	Sim/Space	Issue 14	★★★★★
Winplanner Plus	The Associates	Sim/Space	Issue 17	★★★
World Book 1998 Deluxe Speech Edit	IBM	Multimedia	Issue 23	★★★★
World Cup 98	EA	Sports	Issue 18	★★★★★
World League Basketball	Mindscape	Sports	Issue 15	★★★
World League Soccer '98	Eidos	Sports	Issue 18	★★★★
Wreckin' Crew	Telstar	Action	Issue 20	★★★
X-COM: Interceptor	MicroProse	Sim/Space	Issue 20	★★★★★
Xenocracy	Grolier	Str/War	Issue 20	★★★★
X-Files: The Game	Fox Interactive	Adv/RPG	Issue 20	★★★★
X-Men: Ravages of the Apocalypse	One Stop	Action	Issue 17	★★
X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter: Balance Of	Virgin	Sim/Space	Issue 14	★★★
Zaero - Quake II Mission Pack	Ubi Soft	Action	Issue 24	★★
Zapitalism! Deluxe	Ionos	Str/War	Issue 15	★★★

In the wake of Team Fortress being dropped from Quake, Valve offers a silver lining

It's annoyed more than a few gamers that the Team Fortress sequel didn't make it for Quake II. Then, after being promised for Half-Life, it disappointingly became a standalone, full-price game instead of a free add-on. Thankfully our howls of frustration haven't gone unnoticed. The same day Valve released a major Half-Life update to fix Internet play (hooray!), it also dropped word that Team Fortress Classic would be made available as a free upgrade by the end of January!

That's right, the same old Team Fortress that reached staggering popularity during the Quake World era (and still is popular for that matter) is coming out for free on the souped-up Half-Life engine. Valve we love you! Just run your Sierra auto update utility while connected to the Net to download the update. Needless to say good old Barrysworld will be running servers – sterling chaps that they are.

Speaking of sophisticated teamplay, as I write, Starsiege Tribes has been released in the US but the European division of Sierra (that's right, same publisher as Half-Life) can't decide when, or even if it should, be released here at all! On one hand we've got developers kicking out the best multiplayer games we've ever seen with superb new teamplay elements pushing back the barrier of multiplayer gaming. On the other hand lumbering publishers are content to release B-grade tat which sells a few hundred copies but not this awesome-looking game simply because it's 'multiplayer only'. Slap me silly if something isn't wrong here!

We're going to be taking a hard look at Starsiege Tribes and Team Fortress Classic next month – so if you're not in a clan, get some buddies together because teamplay is coming to town – big time. Charge…!

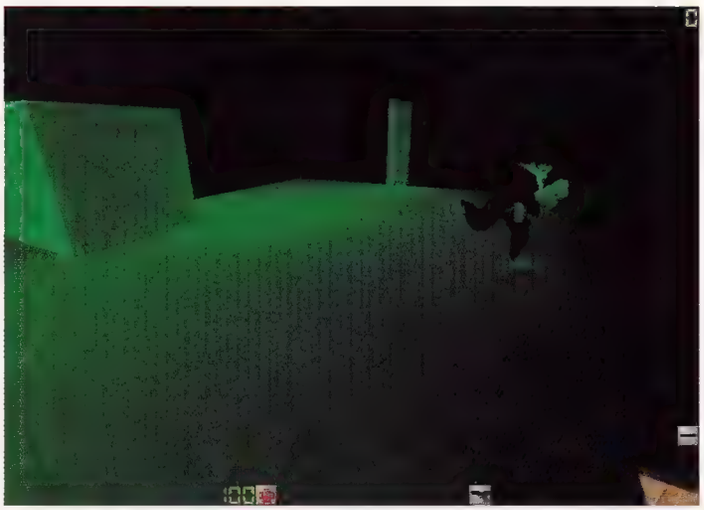
http://www.sierra.com/dynamix/tribes/
The official Sierra Starsiege Tribes site
http://www.tribesplayers.com
Good-looking, third-party fan site for Starsiege Tribes

Mat 'The Lurker' Bettinson
Comments or questions about online gaming? Write to Mat or email him on mat@mats.net

In association with
Wireplay
For the best in online entertainment

Extremities for Quake II

Mods and rockers



No online connection required to use some great Quake modifications

There's been a lot of interest generated by Extremities – mostly because of the recognition given to the Quake II add-on authors by the creators of Quake. All the mods included in the box have been chosen by members of the Id staff, and include some of the most popular mods available.

Bundled with Extremities is the latest Quake II patch for Gamespy, to get you connected to Internet games quickly, and 10 of the best multiplayer mods ever created, including Rocket Arena 2, Action Quake 2, Jailbreak and CHAOS Deathmatch. Also included are six maps from Sten 'ztn' Uusvali, and six from Daniel 'Trebz' Nolan, along with the giant 64-player maps created by Id. As if this wasn't enough, there is Rowan 'Sumaleth' Crawford's Zumlin player plug-in model, and Ryan 'Rydah' Feltrin's seminal deathmatch opponent, the Eraser bot. Now you can hone your skills without having to be connected to any online service.

Extremities really is a collection of the best the Quake II community has to offer. Each of these additions has been created out of interest in Quake II, not for financial gain. If you've wondered what some of these mods would be like to play but have been out off by the size of the download, now's your chance.

Tom Gordon

ESSENTIALS:
Activision, 0181 944 9000, £14.99, 1-32 players (2-32 via LAN or Internet), Keyboard, mouse, Age Rating: ELSPA 15+

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:
Installation: Win95/Win98 requires registered version of Quake II, Minimum PC P133, 16Mb RAM, Dual-speed CD, VGA, DirectX-compatible sound, Advanced Graphics Support: Open GL, 3Dfx, Power VR

DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

RELEASE DATE: Out Now

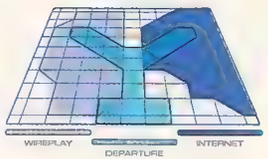
★ ★ ★ ★

SELECT YOUR DESTINATION

WIREPLAY » NOW WITH INTERNET ACCESS

WWW.WIREPLAY.CO.UK

GAMER ACCESS: ACCEPTED



Wireplay now gives you the Internet with its high speed dedicated gaming service.

- no-commitment, no-credit card, pay-as-you-go option
- complete subscription service including Web space, Email and full support

Select your destination: Download the software now from www.wireplay.co.uk or call Freefone 0800 800 918 for your free CD-ROM.

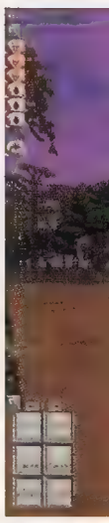
Wireplay Internet Subscription is available through BT Internet for £11.75 **with Wireplay included free!**
Wireplay Internet Pay-As-You-Go with calls charged at local rates plus 1p a minute.
Wireplay's high speed games service is still available for 2.5p a minute or just £9.95 per month with calls charged at local rates.

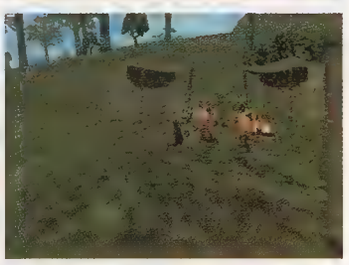
Wireplay
The games network from BT

ROLEPLAYING

EVERQUEST

LABEL: Sony
DEVELOPER: 989 Studios





If you play online roleplaying games such as Meridian 59 or Ultima Online then you'll *know* about EverQuest – the new, massively multiplayer (up to 1,500 players per server), online roleplaying game from 989 Studios, backed by Sony. In the online world the hype surrounding this game is astounding, and very little of this is generated by 989 Studios. There are literally hundreds of Web sites dedicated to the game and some have been up since the first rumours began in mid-1997. As soon as the planned beta test was announced it became enormously oversubscribed as more than 60,000 enthusiastic gamers eagerly filled in the Web-based form.

For the uninitiated – a little background. Multi-User-Dungeons (MUDs) are one of the earliest forms of online gaming. About four years ago, in a pioneering move, 3DO bought a young company (Archetype) and released a first-person graphical MUD called Meridian 59. Then Origin hopped on the bandwagon and tried to scale things up a considerably with Ultima Online.

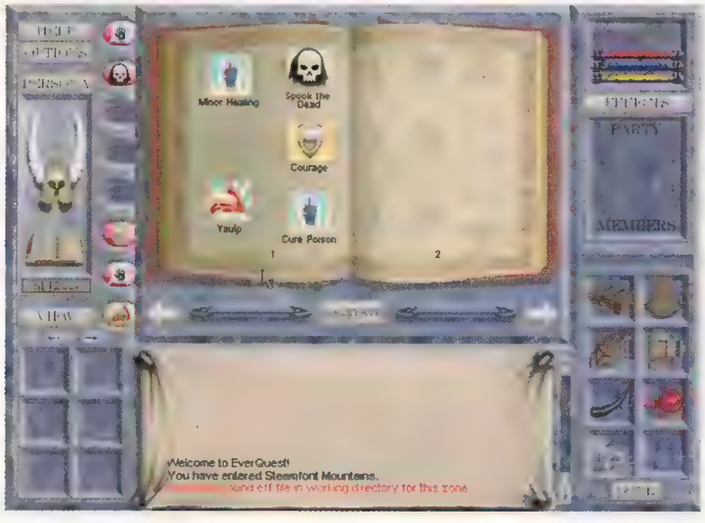
Both companies soon came to realise the scale of the undertaking when they took their games to full commercial release. If they'd asked the Almighty for some advice beforehand he probably would have said something like: 'Just don't bother. Creating the world is a piece of cake – it's the population that causes the headaches.'

In a 'massively multiplayer' game it only takes one 'money bug' for the entire virtual world economy to collapse, it only takes one hacker to ruin days or weeks' of character development for other players, and it only takes one unpleasant individual to upset hundreds – as 3DO and Origin quickly discovered.

Now, it's 989 Studios turn to tackle the problems of the persistent universe game. In online roleplaying games such as EverQuest, the player can create a character, build it up through experience of combat and quests, assume a role, develop friendships – and feuds – with other players, perhaps even join a guild and become involved in some intense political intrigue.

Visually, EverQuest is a real treat. There has been a long-standing assumption that online roleplaying games must – as a consequence of latency issues – be graphically simplistic compared with single-player games. EverQuest proves this is not the case with huge maps boasting as many objects moving within that area. The hardware-accelerated 3D graphics engine (and it will require hardware acceleration) is extremely impressive – monsters move realistically round convincingly textured and contoured landscapes, and multi-coloured spell effects glow and dance across the screen.

The view is neither first-person-only nor isometric, but true 3D. This means that you can either opt to look through your character's eyes first-person style, flick to a chase view or use one of the two external views which can



989 STUDIOS

An interview with Charles Flock, customer service manager for 989 Studios

PCGW: How big is the development team behind EverQuest?
CF: Around 20. It started smaller but it grew as the plans for the game became more ambitious. The development team is extremely dedicated to this project.
PCGW: One of your team hinted that international servers were likely – can you confirm this?
CF: It's being discussed and considered. Personally I think they are inevitable, but as of now there are no definite plans.
PCGW: How realistic is the new release date of 16 March?
CF: I believe it's as firm as you can get in this business – I will be surprised if we don't make it. We are well positioned to make that date.
PCGW: Will you have support staff available online all the time? How many will be volunteer Guides and how many will be 989 staff?
CF: We are certainly aiming for 24-hour support. Our Guides are a critical component of this. By launch I think we will be able to cover very nearly 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week. The number of 989 staff depends on the number of servers.

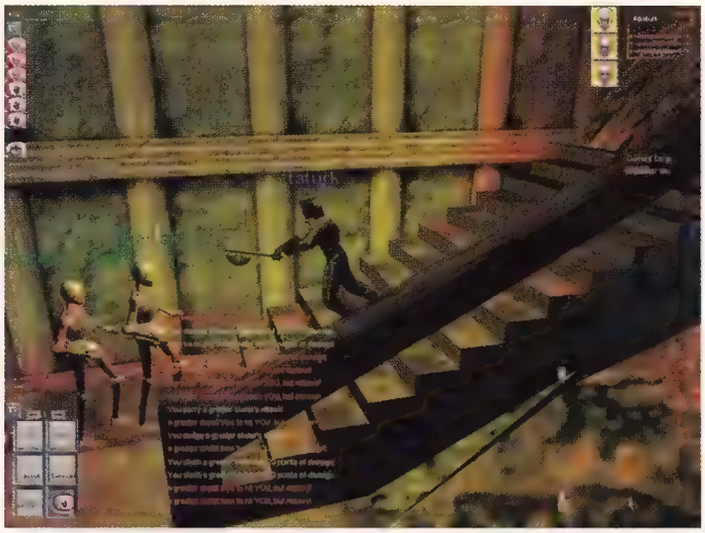
pan and zoom round your character. The fluidity of animation coupled with the detailed and hugely varied environment contribute towards an exceptionally immersive experience.

EverQuest is vast. The world is divided up into zones and although there's an annoying load time of several seconds as you cross a zone, each zone is so large that this doesn't overly detract from gameplay. Some beta testers have been playing for months and still haven't explored one-third of the world – and not for want of trying. Crossing from one side of the world to the other would take several hours even if you knew exactly where you were going. My first journey by ship lasted 25 minutes (I'd waited longer than that for its arrival at the dock), and the first thing every player does is get thoroughly lost in their starting town.

The EverQuest world is diverse and hardly a day will go by where you won't see or hear of a new item, monster, quest or dungeon. You can play one of 14 different classes and 12 different races in classic Advanced Dungeons & Dragons-style. Fortunately each account has several character slots so you can try out different race/class combinations without losing your favourite characters.

As you perform quests for non-playing characters, kill critters, and generally adventure round the land, you'll gain experience points which very often means gaining a level. This gives more health, perhaps more spells and more room for improvement of your skills. The skills are capped at each level to prevent people using third-party software and Blu-Tack on the keyboard tricks to practise skills while away from their computer.

EverQuest is not a Player versus Player game although this is an option. Producer Brad McQuaid has said from the start that EverQuest sets out to be a Player versus Environment game – more reminiscent of the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons



style. Players are encouraged to group up, and in the higher levels this is pretty much a necessity from a survival standpoint.

One, if not *the* most impressive aspect of the game is the quality of the non-player character AI. Monsters will team up, retreat, call for help, and remember you from previous encounters. Rather than taking on the tough guys, they may target healers, casters and weaker team members depending on the circumstances. In fact the biggest single complaint from new beta testers is how difficult it is to stay alive for your first few hours in the game. But although you die with alarming regularity, the experience system is balanced such that early deaths are not too painful.

For me, the most reassuring thing is not the attention to detail, the bang up-to-date graphics engine, the size, the diversity, the rock-solid virtual economy, the sophisticated AI and faction system, or even the refreshing approach to optional Player versus Player. My confidence comes from seeing tried and tested MUD principles that have existed for decades being used by the development team – it's clear right from the outset they have the right experience.

The game still has its bugs, balance issues and other problems such as a quirky and cumbersome chat engine, but there should be enough time for the creases to be ironed out before the release date. EverQuest is currently approaching its final beta phase. The AI, non-playing characters, quests and game world are in and running fairly smoothly (but still being tweaked, of course). Guilds, faction and Player versus Player code is just being finalised.

If 989 Studios can handle the paying customers as well as it's handling the beta testers – and stamp on all the exploiters, cheats and troublemakers while keeping the game world a fair, fun and rewarding place to be, then EverQuest will be the definitive online roleplaying experience for 1999.

Kerry Fraser-Robinson

THE PITCH: Massively multiplayer roleplaying game with vast and varied world to explore

THE PROSPECTS: Shows far more attention to the issues involved in managing online roleplayer than any of its rivals. Huge, and technologically rather special

DUE: 16 March

WIREPLAY TAKES ON KASPAROV

◆ For further information: www.wireplay.com

To launch BT's new Internet games service, Play Games Now!, Wireplay staged an exhibition match at the Royal Society of Arts between world chess champion Gary Kasparov and a trio of teams from Wireplay, the press (including *PC Gaming World*'s sub-lethal combination of Fred Chate and Elvis Bacon), and the English National Schools Champions.

Playing three games simultaneously, Kasparov took the expected clean sheet of victories. However, as *Daily Telegraph* chess correspondent and event compere Malcolm Pein pointed out, he was made to apply himself on several occasions by young Gawain Jones, aged eleven-and-a-half.

The Play Games Now! service takes a number of 'mind games' from Wireplay's closed network and makes them available as an open service to Internet users. Where Wireplay hopes to score major points over the many services offering the likes of chess and backgammon on the Net is with its affiliation with leading organisations such as the English Bridge Union, Chess and Bridge, the British Isles Backgammon Association and the Mind Sports Olympiad. As well as match and social play (including the first UK-wide online chess championship for schools to be contested in late February and March), tutorial sessions and advice will be made available to novice and experienced players alike.

BT's Play Games Now! gets under way at the Wireplay launch exhibition

In addition, Play Games Now! will support server-based games which means that players will be able to jump into and out of games in progress rather than having to start new games from scratch. Chess and Backgammon will be available from the January launch with Bridge following within a matter of days, and then the likes of Cribbage and Hearts pencilled in for later in the year.

GREATEST HITS OF ALL TIME

This might be considered something rather special. Absolutely rather excellent, in fact. The PC Gaming World readers' greatest games of all time. Updated monthly – based cumulatively on your votes (for which we say 'thanks, v much'). If you'd like to vote please follow the instructions in the coupon at the foot of the page. This month: Total Annihilation enters the 20 for the first time as Unreal stalls just above the half-way mark. A good month for LucasArts as both X-Wing and The Curse Of Monkey Island show good rises. A good month too for space trading as both Elite and Frontier 2: Elite move on up. Strong moves also from the very biggest of last year's games – Age Of Empires, Worms 2 and Grand Theft Auto. And finally Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines and X-COM: Interceptor are both new entries…

NE – New Entry **RE** – Re-Entry

Position		Title	Label	Game Type
1	(1)	Command & Conquer: Red Alert	Westwood	Strat/War
2	(2)	Command & Conquer	Westwood	Strat/War
3	(3)	Duke Nukem 3D	GT	Action
4	(4)	Quake	GT	Action
5	(5)	Tomb Raider	Eidos	Action
6	(6)	Doom	GT	Action
7	(8)	Quake II	Activision	Action
8	(7)	Civilization II	MicroProse	Strat/War
9	(10)	SimCity 2000	Maxis	Strat/War
10	(9)	Doom II	GT	Action
11	(14)	Age Of Empires	Microsoft	Strat/War
12	(11)	Diablo	Blizzard	Adv/RPG
13	(12)	Worms	Team 17	Action
14	(13)	Warcraft II	Blizzard	Strat/War
15	(18)	Grand Theft Auto	Take 2	Action
16	(15)	Formula 1 Grand Prix 2	MicroProse	Action
17	(16)	Theme Hospital	Bullfrog	Strat/War
18	(17)	TIE Fighter	LucasArts	Simulation
19	(21)	Total Annihilation	GT	Strat/War
20	(19)	Tomb Raider II	Eidos	Action
21	(22)	Championship Manager 2	Eidos	Sports
22	(20)	X-COM: UFO - Enemy Unknown	MicroProse	Strat/War
23	(23)	Dungeon Keeper	Bullfrog	Strat/War
24	(24)	X-COM: Terror From The Deep	MicroProse	Strat/War
25	(26)	Championship Manager 2: 97/98	Eidos	Sports
26	(25)	Transport Tycoon	MicroProse	Strat/War
27	(28)	Carmageddon	SCi	Action
28	(27)	FIFA '97	EA Sports	Sports
29	(29)	Theme Park	Bullfrog	Strat/War
30	(30)	Secret of Monkey Island 2	LucasArts	Adv/RPG
31	(31)	MechWarrior II	Activision	Action
32	(32)	Civilization	MicroProse	Strat/War
33	(33)	Secret Of Monkey Island	LucasArts	Adv/RPG
34	(38)	Worms 2	Team 17	Strat/War
35	(40)	X-Wing	LucasArts	Simulation
36	(34)	Broken Sword	Virgin	Adv/RPG
37	(35)	Heroes Of Might & Magic II	3DO	Adv/RPG
38	(42)	X-COM: Apocalypse	MicroProse	Strat/War
39	(37)	Sam & Max Hit The Road	LucasArts	Adv/RPG
40	(36)	Network Q RAC Rally	Europress	Simulation
41	(39)	MDK	Interplay	Action
42	(44)	Sensible World Of Soccer	GT	Sports
43	(41)	Screamer	Virgin	Action
44	(43)	Railroad Tycoon	MicroProse	Strat/War
45	(45)	EF 2000	Ocean	Simulation
46	(48)	Unreal	GT	Action
47	(46)	Myst	Red Orb	Adv/RPG
48	(47)	Dune II - Battle For Arrakis	Westwood	Strat/War
49	(50)	Blade Runner	Westwood	Adv/RPG
50	(53)	Settlers II: Veni, Vidi, Vici	Blue Byte	Strat/War

Position		Title	Label	Game Type
51	(49)	Screamer 2	Virgin	Action
52	(51)	Ultima Underworld	Origin	Adv/RPG
53	(52)	FIFA Road To World Cup 98	EA Sports	Sports
54	(58)	Curse Of Monkey Island	LucasArts	Adv/RPG
55	(54)	SimCity	Maxis	Strat/War
56	(55)	FIFA '96	EA Sports	Sports
57	(56)	Panzer General	Mindscape	Strat/War
58	(57)	Colonization	MicroProse	Strat/War
59	(62)	Day Of The Tentacle	LucasArts	Adv/RPG
60	(59)	Discworld II	Psygnosis	Adv/RPG
61	(60)	Dark Forces	LucasArts	Action
62	(61)	Master Of Orion	MicroProse	Strat/War
63	(63)	Syndicate Wars	Bullfrog	Strat/War
64	(64)	Eternal Dagger	Mindscape	Adv/RPG
65	(71)	Indycar Racing	Sierra Studios	Simulation
66	(65)	Warcraft	Blizzard	Strat/War
67	(67)	Dark Forces 2: Jedi Knight	LucasArts	Action
68	(66)	Wing Commander IV	Origin	Simulation
69	(68)	Master Of Orion II	MicroProse	Strat/War
70	(69)	The Dig	Dreamworks	Adv/RPG
71	(70)	Ultima Underworld 2	Origin	Adv/RPG
72	(72)	Indiana Jones & The Fate Of Atlantis	LucasArts	Adv/RPG
73	(73)	Steel Panthers	Mindscape	Start/War
74	(74)	Little Big Adventure	Electronic Arts	Adv/RPG
75	(79)	Syndicate	Bullfrog	Action
76	(81)	Elite	Game Tek	Simulation
77	(82)	Frontier: Elite 2	Game Tek	Simulation
78	(83)	Harpoon	Mindscape	Strat/War
79	(78)	C&C Red Alert: The Aftermath	Westwood	Strat/War
80	(75)	Monopoly	Hasbro	Clas/Puzz
81	(76)	PGA European Golf	EA Sports	Sports
82	(77)	Worms United	Team 17	Strat/War
83	(80)	Age Of Rifles	Mindscape	Strat/War
84	(84)	Wing Commander III	Origin	Simulation
85	(85)	Realms Of The Haunting	Gremlin	Adv/RPG
86	(89)	StarCraft	Blizzard	Strat
87	(90)	Little Big Adventure 2	Electronic Arts	Adv/RPG
88	(86)	Premier Manager '97	Gremlin	Sports
89	(87)	Pirates	MicroProse	Strat/War
90	(88)	7th Guest	Virgin	Adv/RPG
91	(93)	War In Russia	Mindscape	Strat/War
92	(94)	X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter	LucasArts	Simulation
93	NE	Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines	Eidos	Strat/War
94	(98)	Ultima VII	Origin	Adv/RPG
95	(99)	Constructor	Acclaim	Strat/War
96	(92)	Ultima VIII	Origin	Adv/RPG
97	(95)	Comanche 3.0	NovaLogic	Simulation
98	(96)	System Shock	Electronic Arts	Adv/RPG
99	(100)	Prince of Persia	Broderbund	Action
100	NE	X-COM: Interceptor	MicroProse	Simulation

VOTE!

Don't miss your chance to vote. Help select the greatest games ever in our readers' poll

So do you agree with the results of our Readers' Chart? If not you can change them for next month. All you have to do is VOTE!
What games are you playing at the moment? What are your favourite games of all time? Please return the coupon with your choices and ratings so that other gamers and game publishers can benefit from your experience.

Please fill out the questionnaire below giving us your opinion. We will be printing the coupon every month.

And as a shameless incentive to register your votes, three lucky winners selected from the entries will win their choice of one current chart game*

LAST ISSUE'S PRIZE WINNERS:
Tom Williams, Wisbech; Matt Limrick, Enfield; and Gordon Biggans, Kirkintillock, Glasgow

What are your five favourite PC games of all time (title/publisher)?

1 _____ /
2 _____ /
3 _____ /
4 _____ /
5 _____ /

What are the three games you've played most recently (title/publisher)?

1 _____ /
2 _____ /
3 _____ /

Please complete the following to enter the prize draw

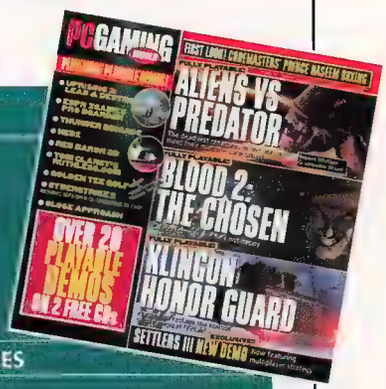
Your name: _____
Your address: _____
Town: _____ Post code: _____
Daytime telephone no: _____

❑ We may want to conduct more research about games playing habits. If you would not be interested in taking part in more research please tick this box
❑ Your personal information will be kept confidential, but from time to time we may want to pass your name and address on to other parties for them to send you information you may be interested in. If you would prefer us not to please tick this box
*Game draw rules: The Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. No employees or affiliates of Ziff-Davis UK may enter. No cash equivalent will be given. Maximum RRP of selected game £45.

WHERE TO SEND YOUR FORM
It's really easy!
Complete the form from the magazine – if you don't want to damage it, photocopy it. You can send the form to us at: PC Gaming World Games Chart, Ziff Davis, International House, 1 St Katharine's Way E1 9UN or fax it to us on 0171 903 8776

ON THE CDS

What's on 'em, how to find it, and how to run it



WHAT'S ON CD A

FULLY PLAYABLE DEMOS

Aliens Vs Predator (Requires 3Dfx/Open GL-compatible 3D card)
Klingon Honor Guard
Blood 2: The Chosen
Uprising 2: Lead & Destroy
Settlers III (New Demo)
ESPN Xgames Pro Boarder
Thunder Brigade
H.E.D.Z
Red Baron 2 3D (Requires 3Dfx/Open GL-compatible 3D card)
Tom Clancy's Ruthless.com
Peter Jacobsen's Golden Tee Golf
CyberStrike 2 – two demos (Require 3Dfx/Open GL-compatible 3D card)
Close Approach

MOVIE PREVIEW

Prince Naseem Boxing

ONLINE

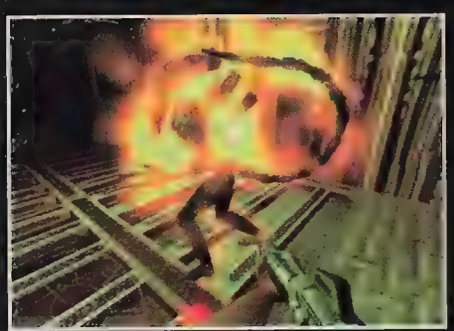
Yahoo! Click
Wireplay
PC Gaming World
ZD Net UK
CompuServe
Lycos

ESSENTIAL UTILITIES

DirectX 6.0
Winzip 7.0
Microsoft ActiveMovie
Quick Time
Win Amp
...And many more

FULLY PLAYABLE DEMOS

SHOOTER SPECIAL: A TRIPLE DOSE OF THE TOP TITLES!



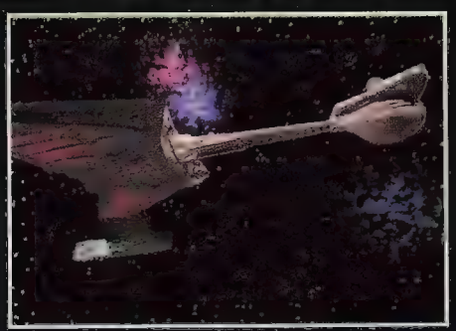
ALIENS VS PREDATOR

Fox Interactive

Fox's Aliens Vs Predator uses a spanking new proprietary 3D engine to deliver some truly sumptuous but sinister sci-fi environments, as two of the deadliest creatures in the universe go head-to-head against each other. In this demo you play the Predator (from the Arnie movie of the same name) and you've got to use your advanced weaponry and stealth capabilities to penetrate the base and make trophies of the human marines camped within. But in your way lies a nest of lethal, acid-spitting Alien warriors...

REQUIREMENTS:

P200, 32Mb RAM, DirectX, Win95/Win98, 3Dfx/Open GL compatible card



KLINGON HONOR GUARD

MicroProse

Join the ranks of the elite Klingon warriors as you are initiated into the Honor Guard, the personal bodyguard of the emperor and defenders of the high council. This covert assignment sees you boarding a secret smugglers' space station where you must evade or destroy the Andorrian guards, go toe-to-toe with the savage Naussicans and detect and defeat the stealthy Lethians as you move towards the heart of the smugglers' lair. Confront their leader Thress and kill him in single combat to preserve the honour of the empire. Take up your bat'leth, for today is indeed a good day to die.

REQUIREMENTS:

P166 MMX for 3D acceleration, P233 for software rendering, 32Mb RAM, 2Mb PCI video card, quad-speed CD

BLOOD 2: THE CHOSEN

GT Interactive

Caleb returns and this time he means business in the sequel to Monolith's cult first-person shooter, Blood. Visceral thrills and gory action await as you prepare to make the Cabal pay for rejecting you as their leader. In this single-level demo you'll investigate the horrors of the Cabal's Centre for Disease Management and their bizarre experiments into genetic research. Caleb's rather, ahem, unique constitution means he can heal himself with the life essence of the dead. Keep an eye out for powerful weapons like the twin machine pistols and assault rifle as you prepare to exact your revenge.

REQUIREMENTS:

P166 for 3D acceleration, P233 for software rendering, 32Mb RAM, DirectX 6, Win95/Win98

MORE FULLY PLAYABLE DEMOS

UPRISING 2: LEAD & DESTROY

Cyclone Studios

After defeating the Imperium in the original Uprising, your New Alliance forces now face mankind's worst nightmare, the Kri'isaaran Horde in this superior sci-fi sequel. This superb demo has both training and combat missions.

REQUIREMENTS:

P166, 32Mb RAM, DirectX 5, Win95/Win98

THE SETTLERS III NEW DEMO!

Sierra

The third in Blue Byte's The Settlers series promises new features like expanded multiplayer support and more extensive combat options. Your followers have to build a viable city, but success ultimately depends on developing a complex web of production and resource lines. A tutorial mission is included in the demo.

REQUIREMENTS:

P100, 32Mb RAM, SVGA with 2Mb, mouse, Win95/WinNT

ESPN XGAMES PRO BOARDER

EA Sports

Take to the slopes and prepare to pull some radical moves in this advanced snowboard sports sim which features full Winter Olympics camera-style views.

REQUIREMENTS:

P166, 32Mb RAM, SVGA with 2Mb, Win95

THUNDER BRIGADE

Interactive Magic

A lightning-fast action/arcade crossover that delivers ferocious thrills and enormous firepower. Pilot your flying tank to death or glory in this futuristic blaster.

REQUIREMENTS:

P133, 32Mb RAM, DirectX, Win95/Win98

H.E.D.Z

Hasbro

One of the most bizarre but compelling game concepts ever. Collect a variety of human H.E.D.Z. – each with their own unique powers and benefits and fight fellow headhunting aliens in the battle for the finest collection. But be careful you don't lose your own!

REQUIREMENTS:

P100, 16Mb RAM, Direct X, Win95

RED BARON 2 3D

Sierra

Duel with the knights of the sky in the latest version of Sierra's World War I 'wing and a prayer' simulator, which now features full 3Dfx support.

REQUIREMENTS:

P133, 32Mb RAM, SVGA with 1Mb, mouse, sound board, 3Dfx/Open GL card, Win95

TOM CLANCY'S RUTHLESS.COM

Red Storm Entertainment

The second game from the Power Plays series, Ruthless.com is set in the high-risk world of modern corporate raiding.

REQUIREMENTS:

P120, 16Mb RAM, 800x600 hi-colour-capable graphics card, DirectX, Win95/Win98

PETER JACOBSEN'S GOLDEN TEE GOLF

IT Inc

Three holes from the golfing arcade sensation which focuses on playability.

REQUIREMENTS:

P90, 16Mb RAM, SVGA with 1Mb, mouse, soundboard, DirectX 5, Win95

CYBERSTRIKE 2 (TWO DEMOS)

Simutronics

The big robot stonker goes multiplayer. The first demo has everything you need to start playing CyberStrike 2 Multiplayer right now! The second also contains two nail-biting single-player missions.

REQUIREMENTS:

P200, 32Mb RAM, DirectX 5.2, 28.8Kbps modem (for Internet play with multiplayer demo only), 3Dfx/Open GL-compatible accelerator 3D card, Win95

CLOSE APPROACH

Abstract Worlds

Engaging 3D Asteroids tribute.

REQUIREMENTS:

Pentium, 16Mb RAM, DirectX, Win95

ONLINE

- [illegible] – Take pay-as-you-go Net access [illegible] Yahoo! and BT
- [illegible] Internet – Get online with Demon
- Wireplay – Get online with BT's new play Client
- After Dark/ZDNet Online – Get news while you're away from your machine
- Get Online with PC Gaming World – Visit PC Gaming World's Web Site Now!
- ZDNetUK – Your One Stop Site
- PC Daily News – Up to the minute news from ZDNetUK
- CompuServe Information Manager – Get connected with CompuServe
- CompuServe 2.6a For Windows 3.x Users – Including Internet Explorer
- CompuServe 3.0.4 For Windows 95 Users – Including Internet Explorer
- CompuServe Home Page Wizard – [illegible] your own home pages on the Internet
- Online Support group Offers – Subscribe online now and save as much as a third of the price!
- PC Gaming World Subscription Offer – GET 6 ISSUES FREE!!
- PC Magazine Subscription Offer – GET 3 FREE ISSUES!!
- PC Direct Subscription Offer – GET 3 FREE ISSUES!!
- ZD Net Tour – Take a tour online
- Ziff Davis CD Content Listings – Search through all Ziff-Davis' CDs since January 97
- The Electronic High Street – Offers and products from our advertisers
- Lycos (MS Internet Explorer users) – Your Portal to the Web
- Lycos (Netscape Navigator users) – Your Portal to the Web

ESSENTIAL UTILITIES

- DirectX 6.0 – The essential install for PC gaming! Newer, better and faster Direct 3D, DirectSound and more!
  - DirectX 6.0 drivers for Win95
  - DirectX 6.0 drivers for Win98
  - DirectX 5.2 Drivers (in the unlikely event you need to backtrack...)
- WinZip v7.0 – Zip File Management for Windows
- Microsoft ActiveMovie – For playing videos and MPGs
- QuickTime – 16- and 32-bit versions
  - QuickTime 16-bit
  - QuickTime 32-bit
- WinAMP – Audio player for several types of sounds
- TreeSize – Analyse the size of folder trees
- Macro Express – Automate your Windows system
- ZD Net's CookieMaster – Exclusive! Monitor Cookie activity on your computer
- PaintShop Pro V5 – Latest upgrade to this popular utility
  - PaintShop Pro V5
  - PaintShop Pro V5 Extras
- SmartWheel – Intellimouse Enhancer
- Vulcan Notes – Computerised stickies

BIG FIGHT SPECIAL

PRINCE NASEEM BOXING

Codemasters

Seconds out! Several short but promising looking movie previews of Codemasters' upcoming Prince Naseem.

WHAT'S ON CD B

FULLY PLAYABLE DEMOS

FIFA 99
Michael Owen's WLS 99
Player Manager Season 98-99
Heretic II (Requires 3Dfx/Open GL-compatible accelerator card)
Heavy Gear II (Requires 3Dfx/Open GL-compatible accelerator card)
Dark Vengeance
Test Drive 4x4
Test Drive 5
Nascar Revolution [Requires D3D-compatible accelerator card]

PATCHES

Quake II v3.20
Unreal
Half-Life
Shogo v2.0
SiN
Blood 2: The Chosen
Trespasser: Lost World v1.0
Ruthless.com
Delta Force
Player Manager Season 98-99

UTILITIES

Caesar 3 Map Editor
LithTech engine editor
Combat Flight Simulator Mission Editor (Requires Microsoft Excel)
Combat Flight Simulator CFS Weapon & Damage editor (Requires Microsoft Excel)
Combat Flight Simulator Vehicle & Building editor (Requires Microsoft Excel)
Combat Flight Simulator Bonus British, American and German radio chatter

HUGE MOVIE PREVIEW SPECTACULAR

Quake III: Arena
Babylon 5: Space Combat Simulator
Homeworld
Gabriel Knight III
Starsiege
Red Baron 2 3D
Pro Pilot '99

FULLY PLAYABLE DEMOS

FOOTIE SPECIAL: A VERITABLE FEAST OF FOOTBALL!

FIFA 99

EA Sports

Welcome to FIFA 99 which many discerning pundits regard as the definitive playable version of the beautiful game. It's currently riding high in the charts, of course. Sumptuous televisual style-graphics, enhanced gameplay, improved AI and authentic international and domestic line-ups assured.

REQUIREMENTS:

P133, 16Mb RAM, SVGA with 2Mb, mouse, sound-board, Win95/Win98

MICHAEL OWEN'S WLS 99

Eidos

Michael Owen, England's most exciting prospect for years, fronts Silicon Dream's finest footballing hour, World League Soccer 99. Prepare for pure pacy arcade-style soccer in a variety of gorgeous footballing environments where you can hone your soccer skills on the way to conquering the big leagues.

REQUIREMENTS:

P133, 16Mb RAM, DirectX 6, Win95/Win98

PLAYER MANAGER SEASON 98-99

Anco

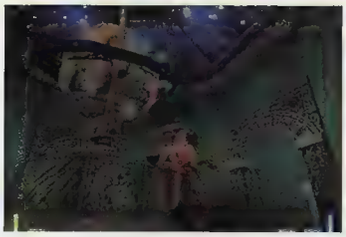
Armchair managers rejoice as Anco's Player Manager 98-99 trots out on to the park. This superb demo showcases one of the best silicon sheepskins to emerge from the current season. Take charge of your favourite club, design your own unique tactics and playing style and reinforce your squad with the stars of world football.

REQUIREMENTS:

P120, 16Mb RAM, DirectX 6, Win95

MORE FULLY PLAYABLE DEMOS

ACTION SPECIAL



HERETIC II

Activision

Raven's fantasy masterpiece proves unequivocally that third-person games can hold their own against the Half-Lifes and Unreals of the world. Join Corvus on an epic tale of glory and revenge, wielding deadly melee weapons like the flashing halberd and harnessing the raw power of magic to defeat your enemies.

REQUIREMENTS:

P133, 32Mb RAM, DirectX6, 3Dfx/OpenGL-compatible 3D card, Win95/Win98

HEAVY GEAR II

Activision

Prepare for big men in metal suits and some ferocious power-armoured action. The sequel to last year's highly regarded exo-skeletal battler looks even better and plays like a dream. This demo features a combat patrol mission where you must penetrate enemy lines and surgically neutralise a vital target.

REQUIREMENTS:

P166, 32Mb RAM, 3Dfx/Open GL-compatible 3D card, Win95

DARK VENGEANCE

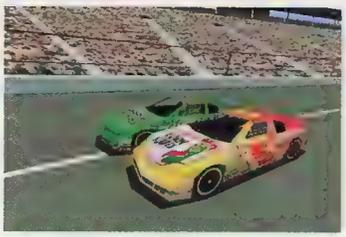
GT Interactive

Gauntlet meets Tomb Raider in GT's innovative Lara-beater with a choice of four fantasy heroes with which to conquer the minions of evil. The Dark Elves have returned from being banished to the abyss and have cast an eclipse which has shrouded the world. Foil their evil machinations in this fantasy combat extravaganza!

REQUIREMENTS:

P166, 16Mb RAM, DirectX 6, Win95

DRIVING SPECIAL



NASCAR REVOLUTION

EA Sports

Welcome to the Revolution – EA's stunning new NASCAR racing sim. Revolution promises the full motoring monty in NASCAR simulation with adjustable physics, car setups, and difficulty settings. Advanced driver AI provides a real challenge with opponents behaving like their real-life counterparts.

REQUIREMENTS:

P200, 32Mb RAM, D3D-compatible 3D accelerator card, hi-colour PCI video card with 1Mb RAM and DirectDraw support, sound card with DirectSound, Win95/Win98

TEST DRIVE 4X4

Accolade

Mud splattered marathon featuring more than 10 classic off-road vehicles including AM General's Hummer, the Land Rover Defender 90 and the Dodge Ram V12. Both software and 3Dfx versions of the demo are included here, and they allow you to race the hefty AM General's Hummer across the winding tracks and desert gulches of the Santa Cruz mountains of California.

REQUIREMENTS:

P166, 16Mb RAM, DirectX, Win95/Win98

TEST DRIVE 5

Accolade

Accolade's mission to capture the clash of modern super cars vs classic muscle cars continues in the sequel to the best-selling Test Drive 4. The full version features 28 different cars and 18 different tracks, and with enhancements like split-screen mode, branching roads, and ultra realistic graphics. This demo provides a very welcome taster of the racing action ahead.

REQUIREMENTS:

P133 (with accelerator) or P200 (software rendering), 32Mb RAM, SVGA graphics, Win95/Win98

ONLINE

The definitive set of all the latest patches and updates

- Quake II v3.20
- Unreal
- Half-Life v1.1
- Shogo v2.0
- SiN
- Blood 2: The Chosen
- Trespasser: Lost World v1.0
- Ruthless.com
- Delta Force
- Player Manager Season 98-99

UTILITIES

Essential additions and extras for your collection

- Caesar 3 Map Editor – Create your Caesar 3 maps and scenarios
- LithTech engine editor

Build and modify Shogo Mobile Armor Division levels. For full instructions see the Shogo ReadmeFirst file contained on the CD

COMBAT FLIGHT SIM SPECIAL!!!

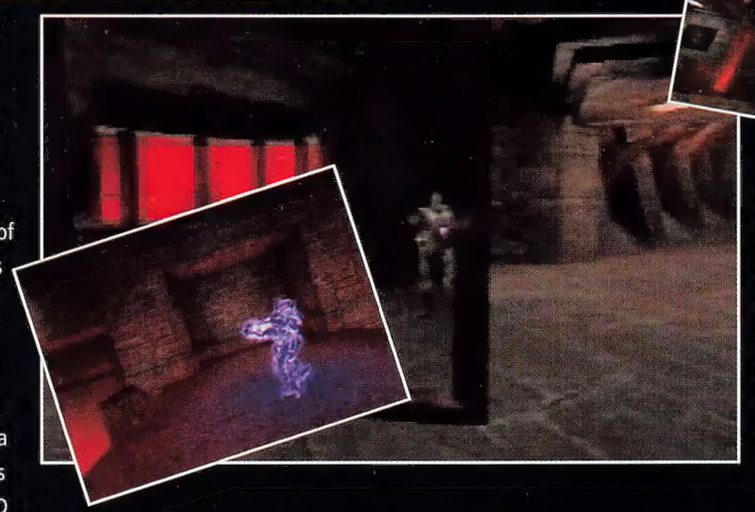
The momentum behind Microsoft's Combat Flight Sim is really starting to build up now with fans contributing extra aircraft and missions on the Internet. Last month we brought you The Cobra's Fangs, the first official mission for CFS, and this month we bring you all the essential utilities and tools to begin designing your own missions and scenarios for the game.

- Combat Flight Simulator Mission Editor – Design and edit missions
- Combat Flight Simulator FS Weapon & Damage editor – Edit plane weapon and damage profiles
- Combat Flight Simulator FS Vehicle & Building editor – Edit vehicles and buildings damage profiles
- Combat Flight Simulator FS Bonus British, American and German radio chatter – Additional radio messages and chatter for Combat Flight Sim.

Note: All editors require a copy of Microsoft Excel to run. The RTF files contained in the Zip archives contain essential instructions on how to modify CFS missions and profiles. This is the only help and instructional material provided for this software by Microsoft. No further support will be provided

HUGE MOVIE PREVIEW SPECTACULAR!

QUAKE III: ARENA



Id (Footage courtesy of ZDTV News)
Id's John Carmack addressed the Macworld Expo on 5 January and unveiled this first-ever look at Quake III: Arena movie on-screen. Carmack was invited by Steve Jobs, Apple's founder, to demonstrate the abilities of the new G3 series of Macs. During his presentation Carmack stated: Quake Arena will set new standards for graphics, networking and gameplay, and the new Macs will be among the best platforms to experience it on as a result of the state-of-the-art advances that platform has made in terms of 3D graphics support. Carmack continued to say that Quake III: Arena is being played via network in Id's office between both PCs and Macs and is due for release on both platforms simultaneously. For more information and a full-length version of Steve Jobs' keynote speech and Carmack's Quake III presentation at Macworld Expo point your web browser at **www.zdnet.com/zdtv**.

The AVI file on your CD-ROM should operate simply by clicking the 'Run' button. If this does not work press install and Intel Indeo 5 will be installed from your CD which will enable you to run the Quake III: Arena movie. (Please note: this movie version has no sound)

BABYLON 5: SPACE COMBAT SIMULATOR

Sierra
Great movie preview of Sierra FX's upcoming Babylon 5 space combat sim. The game is still due for a late spring launch – and the game features a terrific free-form universe and epic space battles. Producer of the TV series, Michael Straczynski's input into the game has been considerable and the game stays faithful to the details of the Babylon 5 world. Fans of the series should not be disappointed!

GABRIEL KNIGHT III

Sierra
Latest in this excellent supernatural private investigator series. The third instalment finds Gabriel hot on the trail of vampires in Bavaria. This will be the first full-3D Gabriel Knight adventure

HOMEWORLD

Sierra
Relic Entertainment's potential masterpiece of a 3D space combat strategy game – taking the genre to new heights with full-blown Star Wars-style battles. The key here is in the speed of the game's remarkable 3D engine allowing ferocious space battles ships swarming across a backdrop of laser-fire and explosions. Deserves to be a spectacular success. Requires MPEG video player (eg Microsoft ActiveMovie – included in Essential Utilities on CD A)

STARSIEGE

Sierra
Sierra's entry into the 'big-Mechs' genre. Developer Dynamix is particularly emphasising the multiplayer capabilities of its giant man-piloted robot fest

RED BARON 2 3D

Sierra
Latest version of the classic World War I flight sim – with full 3D support

PRO PILOT '99

Sierra
The 1999 outing for Sierra's civilian flight sim

CD LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

Here's how to get your PC Gaming World CD running

1. Turn on your system and allow it to boot
2. Insert your *PC Gaming World* CD into your CD drive tray, close the drive tray and wait for the light to go out. Now you can run the disc from Windows 3.1x or Win95/Win98

TO RUN USING WIN95/WIN98

Click on the Start button and choose Run. Then type d:\go.exe (where d: is the letter of your CD-ROM drive)

TO RUN USING WINDOWS 3.1

Go to the File Manager icon (the filing cabinet icon in the main menu) and open your CD-ROM drive by clicking on the appropriate drive letter. Now click on go.exe

ABOUT THE INTERFACE

PC Gaming World's interface is arranged into a number of folders. Just double-click on the appropriate folder icon for a list of: Games, Quake, Utilities, Online, and How To Subscribe To *PC Gaming World*. When you double-click on a program, a brief description will appear. Click on the install button in the middle of the screen to copy and run a title

NOTE

Although not all programs featured need a high-spec machine to run, please note that you need at least 256 colours and 1Mb of video RAM in order to load *PC Gaming World*'s front-end program

DISCLAIMER

While we take great care in the selection, testing and installation of software on the *PC Gaming World* CD, Ziff-Davis can accept no responsibility for any data loss or any other damage occurring during the CD-ROM's use. You should always back up your hard drive before installing any new software, especially when installing DirectX programs. *PC Gaming World* cannot guarantee that this CD-ROM disk will work on every PC ever manufactured

PC GAMING WORLD DISC HOTLINE

If you're having problems with this disk – or if the disc is broken – fear not, for help is at hand. Just call our hotline 0870 908 0782 between 9am and 5pm (Monday to Friday – closed bank holidays and weekends). Or drop them an email at pcgwcdhelp@zd.com

DIRECTX PROBLEM, NO PROBLEM

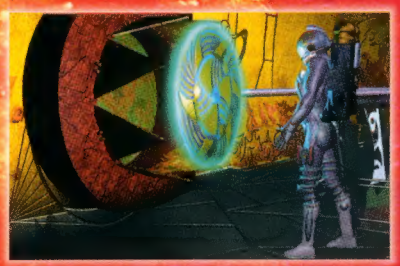
Problems – No Problem! Most Win95/Win98 games need DirectX drivers to run correctly. If a demo starts popping up error messages then it's likely that the DirectX drivers are missing. To correct this snag, try installing the drivers held in the essentials folder on the CD

CYDONIA™

LEAD THE FIRST MANNED MISSION

- Based on the NASA & Russian space programs

- Solve engaging 3D puzzles and learn aUI Space Language

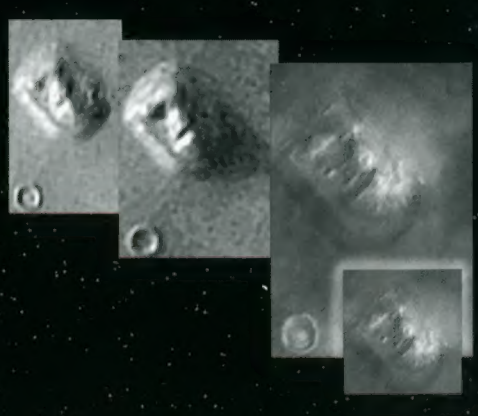


- Seamless and highly responsive 360 degree navigation
- Over 70 hours of non-linear gameplay with multiple endings

- Over 55,000 frames of stunning 3D scenes & animation

YOUR MISSION IS TO TRAVEL TO THE CYDONIA MENSAE REGION OF MARS TO SURVEY THE PLANET FOR THE PROSPECT OF HUMAN COLONISATION. USE YOUR INTELLECT AND SKILL... LEARN aUI SPACE LANGUAGE... DECIPHER AND COLLECT CLUES... ENCOUNTER CHALLENGING 3D PUZZLES... UNCOVER THE SECRETS OF A MARTIAN CIVILISATION CONCEALED WITHIN THE RED PLANET.

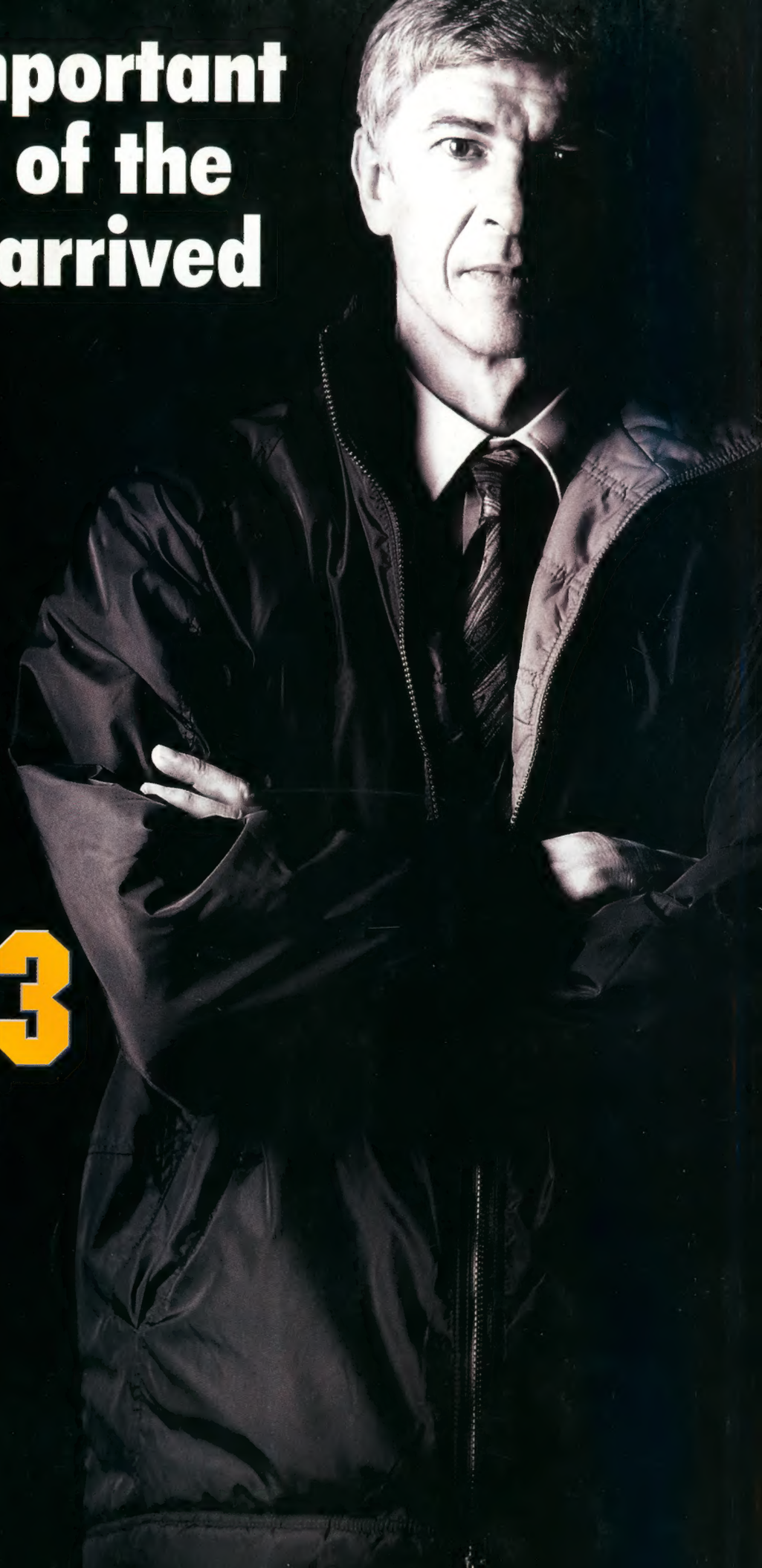
LAUNCHING MARCH 1999



ZABLAC Entertainment
Newton Abbot Devon TQ12 2BP
Telephone: 01626 332233 Fax: 01626 331464
email: zablac@ablac.co.uk
www.zablac.co.uk

Published in the UK by:
ZABLAC Entertainment™

The most important home game of the season has arrived



Championship MANAGER 3™

Release date February 1999

PC CD

sportsinteractive

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

www.eidosinteractive.co.uk

Championship Manager™3. Developed by Sports Interactive Limited. © and Published by Eidos Interactive 1998. All Rights Reserved.

Made with love by

Our goal is to preserve classic video game magazines so that they are not lost permanently.

People interested in helping out in any capacity, please visit us at retromags.com.

No profit is made from these scans, nor do we offer anything available from the publishers themselves.

If you come across anyone selling releases from this site, please do not support them and do let us know.

Thank you!